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**LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA**

**NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**1967 – 1976**

**LPA NEWS CLIPS 1967 – 1976**



1967



**MAJOR MIDGET MATTERS**—Times reporter discusses problems of midgets with members of Little People of America, Inc., left to right, Jerry Marens,

Felix Silla, Billy Barty, founder, and Lee Kitchens, president. Barty, a television personality, said too many have wrong idea about ability of little people.

Times photo by Bruce Cox

## MIDGETS MEET

### Little People Tell of Big Nuisances

"We don't have any problems—just nuisances."

Problems, explains 4-foot, 1-inch Lee Kitchens, "mean you are looking for answers. We already know the answers."

Kitchens, a Richardson, Tex., resident who manages an engineering branch for Texas Instruments, Inc., is president of Little People of America, Inc.

More than 200 of the wee folk—all under 4 feet, 10 inches—gathered at the Hollywood Knickerbocker Monday for a week of social events and consideration of some of the "nuisances."

Clothing and finding a job are among the major ones, Kitchens says—particularly jobs.

#### Too Many Unqualified

"The trouble is too many little people are not qualified for the work they want to do," says the engineer. "This gives them an added handicap on top of their size."

Billy Barty, 3-foot, 9½-inch television and movie personality who founded the group in 1957, adds another area.

"Preconceived notions on the part of big people," he says. "Too many have the wrong idea about the abilities and intelligence of little people."

Both Barty and Kitchens say they don't know what a "normal" person is. They refer to people taller than they as "big people."

Jerry Marens, 4 feet, 3 inches, has another complaint:

"We get paid according to our size," he says.

Barty uses the term "midget" to explain the general lack of knowledge about dwarfism: A midget is a type of dwarf who is perfectly proportioned but "about two-thirds size."

"They have already classified 40 to 50 types of dwarfs," he says, and "we're helping them to find more."

### LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA HOLD MEETING

HOLLYWOOD (AP)—Finding clothes and a job are the major nuisances, said 4-foot-1 Lee Kitchens, president of the Little People of America, Inc., holding its annual convention here.

Kitchens, from Richardson, Tex., said Monday, "The trouble is too many little people aren't qualified for the work they want to do. This gives them an added handicap on top of their size."

But Kitchens has overcome any handicap, rising to manager of an engineering branch of Texas Instruments, Inc.



# The Everyday World of the 'Little People'

Here's What It's  
Like to Be One of the 70  
or So Baltimoreans  
Who Are Undersized

Photos by WILLIAM L. KLENDER

By RALPH REPPERT

**W**ALK over to the wall and post an imaginary letter in an imaginary mailbox that rises 7½ feet above the floor.

Pretend to put in a call at a coin-operated wall phone that's even higher.

Simulate the business of getting a drink from a water fountain 6 feet high.

File a letter in one of the top drawers of a cabinet as tall as a doorway.

Select a can of peas from a supermarket shelf that runs just below the ceiling.

And think of a way to manage a grin when somebody says to you, every time you hesitate: "What's the matter, Shorty?"

You have just lived in the everyday world of the midget.

If you happen to be one of the 70 undersized citizens estimated to live in Baltimore, you can handle your life in one of two ways.

You can withdraw from the world and avoid all embarrassing contact with people. Some of them do.

Or, in the manner of 4-foot Sammy Ross, the musical comedian, you can go about your business with a quip: "Watch your lip, fellow. I'm instant man. I can stand in the rain for two minutes and be 6 feet tall."

Sammy isn't as truculent as his wisecrack.

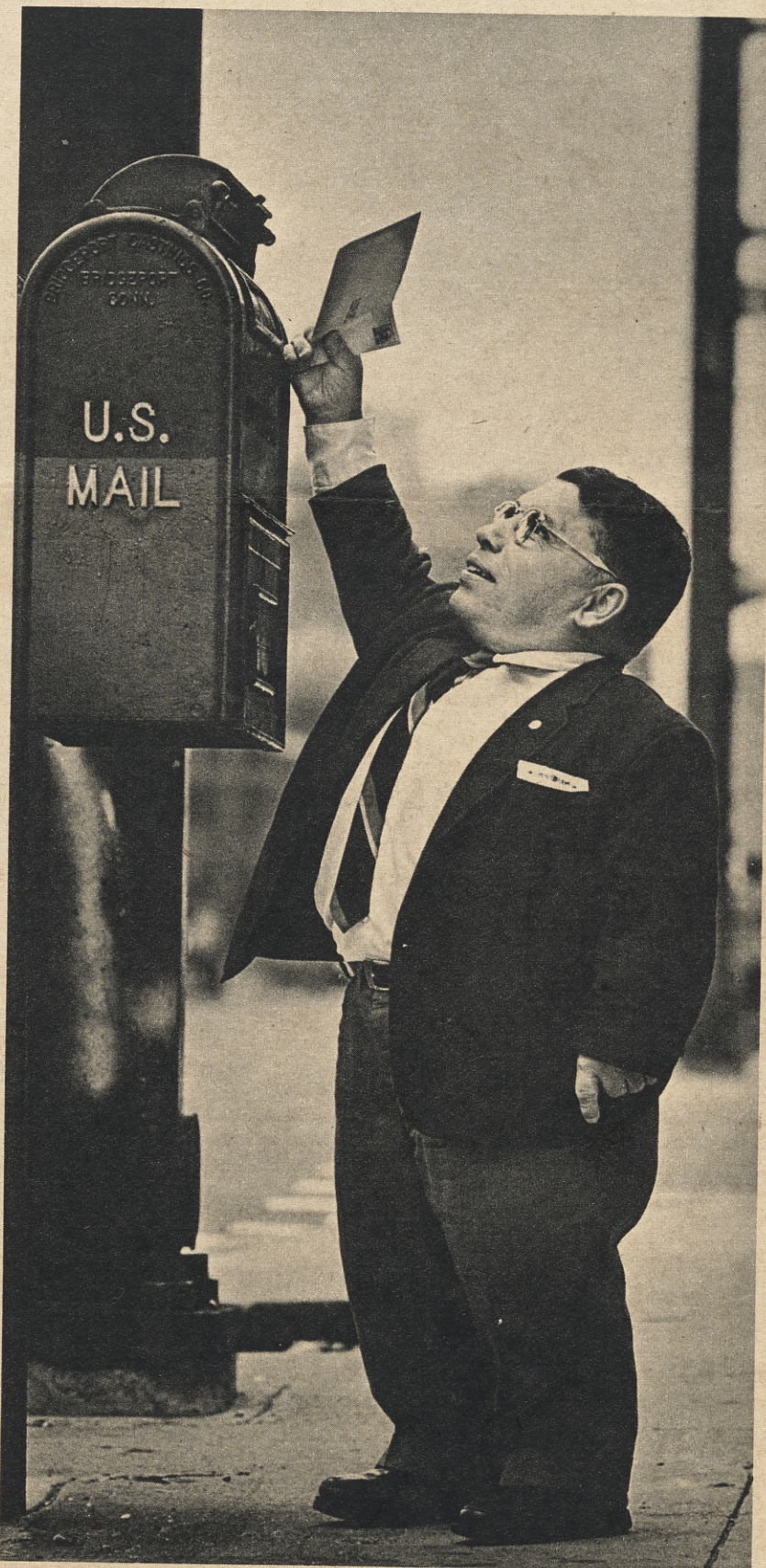
"My world," he says, "is pretty much the same as yours—somewhere between perfect and lousy. I don't expect the world ever to change to suit me, so I take my share of it the way it is."

This is not to say that little folks can dispose of every problem by shrugging it off.

**L**IFE insurance used to be a problem for them. Little folks live as long as other people. But many insurance companies hesitated to take a chance on them until some of the larger firms investigated and began writing standard-risk policies for them.

Employment is a many-sided problem. Because of their size, many little people hesitate to go out and hustle for a job. They cannot compete at all in the heavy labor fields. And—in spite of their success as artists, builders, salesmen, engineers, bankers, teachers, lawyers, entertainers, and in all phases of business and Government work—much of business and industry is reluctant to hire them.

Clothing is harder to find than for tall-thins, short-stouts and other off-size shoppers, especially for the women. Miss Kathleen (Dee Dee) Sass, a clerk in the Medical Records Section at Johns



Robert B. Hinkson, just 3 feet 7 inches tall, illustrates one inconvenience of Little People—mail boxes placed for those of average stature.

Hopkins Hospital, is just 4 feet tall. She selects junior-petite sizes in such ready-made clothing as she can find, and sews herself what she cannot buy. Various Baltimore stores offer sport shoes she can wear, in the children's departments, but for dress shoes she must buy by mail from a Boston store.

Robert B. Hinkson, of Ellicott City, is 3 feet 7 inches tall. He refuses to use the word *problem*.

"Say *inconvenience*," he says. "Say *annoyance*. But don't say *problem*. A problem is something you don't have an answer to, at least for the moment."

Hinkson, an accountant at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, was at one time nominated for a Handicapped Man of the Year award. He insisted that his name be withdrawn.

"I'm short," he explained, "but I'm not handicapped."

**B**y annoyance, Hinkson refers to such things as not being able to see the food in steam trays at cafeterias. ("Look at the meals others are eating, and order what looks good.") And to taking a chair to stand on in voting booths. ("Election officials usually wonder where they will find a stepladder, never thinking that a chair will do very nicely.") And to not being able to reach the buttons for high floors in many elevators. ("Usually there's a fellow passenger.")

Like most undersized men, Hinkson finds driving an automobile one of the easiest things he does, even though he must have a special seat to see over the steering wheel. Pedal extensions bring accelerator and brake to comfortable operating position for him.

All three—Hinkson, Miss Sass and Sammy Ross—are members of the Baltimore chapter of Little People of America, a national group which draws its members from the estimated 5,000 midgets and dwarfs in North America. A midget, although defined as "an undersized person," is generally understood to mean a perfectly proportioned small person, with the word dwarf applying to those with shorter than average trunks, arms or legs. The national association would like to see the word midget defined clearly to take in all undersized people.

The national organization was formed in 1957 with 21 members. It now has 850 active members—but its publications and directories go out to 4,500 people.

The Baltimore chapter, three years old, has 35 active members, half of the undersized people in Baltimore. The local group has been active enough to bring to Baltimore next year's national

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# Problems? No; Dwarfs Merely Have Inconveniences, Says One of Them

Continued from Page 13

convention of the Little People of America, with more than 500 expected. It will be held late in July. Its theme: "Think Big!"

The national group has already put together a scholarship fund for little people. It has organized an adoption agency through which dwarfed children have been taken from orphanages to live with foster parents of both midget and normal heights. It has formed an employment clearing house through which the country's scattered little people report job openings that other undersized men and women can fill.

The L.P.A., as its members call it, is divided into a dozen districts, with District 3 covering Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, the Carolinas and the District of Columbia. City or district meetings are held the third weekend of every month, when members get together to bowl, swim, play miniature golf, picnic or dance. Within the organization are two others, one for teen-agers called Teen Littles, and one for the small children called Little Littles.

Dwarf or midget couples often have undersized children. Many of the younger members attend the meetings with parents of average height. This, L.P.A. members feel, is one of the most significant accomplishments of the group.

"If you're born small," says Sammy Ross, "you can't learn too soon to live with it. In the first place, certain types of dwarfs can be made to grow with special feeding, if the treatment begins soon enough.

"The psychology of being small is something else that ought to be taken up very early, by both the little people and their parents."

**T**HERE are undersized Baltimoreans who, rather than face the world, stay at home, allowing their parents to provide for their every need.

"What happens," asks Dee Dee Sass, "when these people lose their parents? It has to happen one day. With no job experience, actually with no living experience, how will they fend for themselves when they have to?"

A heartbreaking example of bad psychological management is one woman of normal height, born of midget parents. She fell in love, became engaged, brought her intended home to meet the family—and never saw him again. At present she is married to another man and living in a distant state. Her husband believes her parents to be dead.

Michael, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sammy Ross, is 10 years old, 45 inches tall. (Mrs. Ross is 5 feet 3.)

"He'll be a little guy," says Sammy, "like his dad. We've never pampered him; don't intend to. I deliberately sent him to the corner mailbox to mail a letter. I didn't know how he would reach the box, but I knew he would. Later I passed the mailbox and saw the brick in front of it, standing edgewise. He'll get along because he's had an early start in looking out for himself."

L.P.A. meetings are mostly social. Members discuss clothing, shows, good places to eat, parties coming up. At the moment they are still hashing over the past summer's national convention.

The convention hotel in Los Angeles, unlike some of the others, charged them full price for rooms and meals.

**H**OTELS finally got wise to us," says Hinkson. "Because I'm shorter than you, I have to take three steps to your one. This is why little people always seem to be hustling. They are. So I burn up a tremendous amount of energy. Even though I'm smaller, I expect I put away the same size meal as the next man.

"I probably can handle more highballs than the next man," Hinkson adds with a wink. "I couldn't stagger if I wanted to. I've got a low center of gravity."

Hanging from the wall in each elevator at the convention hotel was a rubber-tipped wooden rod. The little people used the rods to tap elevator buttons for the higher floors.

The elevator rods were contributed by a West Coast metal worker, himself a small person. He is working at present on a collapsible rod with which little people will be able to drop coins into high wall telephones.

The hotel slipped up on its hospitality in only two ways.

"They served us at conventional banquet tables which were circular and 6 feet across," Hinkson says, "and they put all the food in the center. One man at each table had to stand on his chair to pass the food.

"And they served us in 4-ounce glasses, presumably because they thought they were apropos. To a thirsty man, a 4-ounce glass looks like something you'd see in a doll house."

Clothing is a constant topic with little women, so much so that a style show always is included in a national convention. There are three classes for showing—clothes bought ready-made, clothes bought ready-made and altered, and self-made clothes. The grand prize this year was taken by a little woman who bought a blouse of conventional size and remodeled it into a smart sports dress.

Kathleen Sass, 4 feet tall, uses a rubber-tipped wooden rod to press the higher floor buttons on elevators. Buying clothing, she looks for junior-petite sizes.



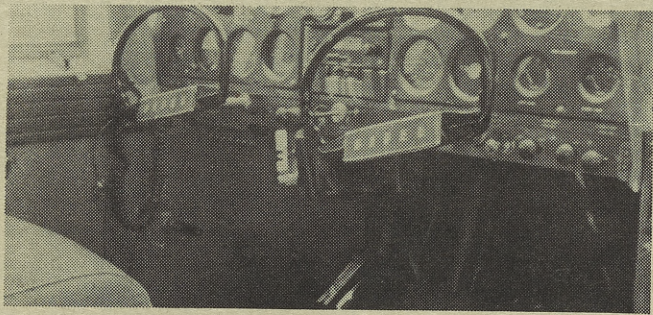
THE SUN MAGAZINE, SEPTEMBER 17, 1967



## Flying 'Little People' from Texas Operate Modified Piper Tri-Pacer



PACKING UP after Little People's convention are Lee and Mary Kitchens.



KITCHENS' TRI-PACER panel showing some of the minor modifications.



HOMEWARD BOUND are Lee and Mary. Note the special cushion used by Mrs. Kitchens on top of the Tri-Pacer's regular seat.

LOS ANGELES — Lee Kitchens of Richardson, Texas, visited Los Angeles recently as the president of a national organization. He arrived flying his own Piper Tri-pacer. These facts would not be at all startling were it not for the fact that Mr. Kitchens is slightly over four feet tall.

So is his wife, Mary, who also is a licensed pilot. Kitchens is the president of Little People of America, a nationwide organization. On a regular basis, Kitchens is an executive with Texas Instruments, Inc. of Dallas.

The Kitchens bought the Tri-Pacer, had it modified, and then learned to fly it. "We bought the plane for two reasons," he told GAN. "First, it has no toe-brakes, and, secondly, it was cheaper." At this point, however, he feels that any single engine aircraft could be modified for his use.

In modifying the Tri-Pacer, the only equipment he had to move was the starter. Originally under the seat, he switched it to the panel. Special controls were made which extended the pedals, hand brake, and wheel, closer to the pilot. These were the only modifications, aside from special cushions which allow Mr. and Mrs. Kitchens to sit higher.

Most of the special equipment can be easily removed allowing the plane to be flown by a conventional sized adult. Occasionally, the Kitchens will take an instructor up in order to stay current.

The Kitchens and their two children do a great deal of local flying around Dallas. Kitchen's father is building a strip on his ranch some 250 miles from Dallas and the family expects to soon increase their flying activity.

"I don't use the Tri-Pacer much for business travel," he told GAN. "Most of my trips are so distant that I use commercial airlines." He carries special equipment in his suitcase for modifying rental automobiles so that he can drive any automatic transmission vehicle.

Little People of America, Inc. currently has nearly nine hundred members. Organized in 1957 by television personality Billy Barty, the group's basic purpose is to provide fellowship, interchange of ideas, solutions to the unique problems of little people,

and moral support.

One of the central goals of the organization is to reach the parents of dwarfed children, Barty told GAN. Often, he said, parents reject their children, and in some cases institutionalize them, even though such youngsters are able to have perfectly normal lives. LPA has set up special programs for children.



# It's A 'Really Big World' To Little People Of America

By DARLENE SNYDER  
Daily News Staff Writer

"We want to be judged on our abilities and not on our size," said Joe Alexander at a recent district meeting of the Little People of America at the R. L. Vining residence in Kelso.

Alexander is president of District 11, Little People of America, which includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Alaska.

The LPA is comprised of persons under 4 feet 10 inches tall and has national affiliations.

The variety of vocations and occupations represented at the meeting would indicate that the Little People are "king-sized" in abilities regardless of what their physical measurements might be.

Alexander, who is speech therapist for the public schools in Klickitat and Skamania counties, and his wife, Martha, traveled from Goldendale, Wash., to attend the meeting.

An excellent spokesman for the organization, Joe is earnest in his desire to change the image Little People have lived with for many years. He notes that there are disadvantages in being shorter than average but does not look upon this as a handicap.

He is a positive man. There is no talk of "equal opportunities" or "job discrimination" in his conversations. Rather, Alexander points out what has been accomplished by individuals because of their abilities. Adaptability and inventiveness, an observer notes, are the keys to this success.

## IT'S A BIG WORLD

It's a big world they live in and when the word "extension" pops up, they are not referring to telephone service. It is a clever innovation made on their cars to enable them to be safe drivers. By extending the brake and gas pedals with an adaptation developed by one of the members they can drive with the ease and safety of anyone else.

Have you ever thought how a person four feet tall could use a pay telephone or a self-operating elevator?

Once again, necessity brought

about the invention of a clever device enabling them to reach those "faraway places." It is an aluminum extension that telescopes down to a few inches in length and can be carried in a pocket or handbag. The telephone receiver can be removed, a coin deposited and the numbers dialed with ease and agility.

That old adage, "If the shoe fits," might well be changed in this case to "If the shoe doesn't fit, remodel it."

Miss Frieda Groeneveld of Tacoma, a sparkling, petite blonde delegate, was crowned National Queen of the Little People of America at their national convention held in California.

A kindergarten teacher in the Franklin-Pierce district, she said with a twinkle that she feels her height is an advantage

in many ways in her profession. Kindergarten is most youngsters' first introduction to school and they seem to accept their new teacher with zeal. Discipline poses no problem, she said, and a conversation with her makes one feel that she views nothing as a "problem," only a slight inconvenience.

The LPA organization encompasses not only adults but children as well, the "little, little people," as they are affectionately called.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Reckendorf of Corvallis, Ore., are co-chairmen of the parents' auxiliary unit.

Their son, Peter, is 17 months old and a handsome, outgoing youngster. Both Mr. and Mrs. Reckendorf are of average size and feel that they have a lot to learn so they can be the right kind of parents for their son.

Mrs. Reckendorf is a home economics graduate and teaches on the Oregon State College staff. She has a straight-forward approach and is quick to point out that the greatest concern of parents of little, little people is that they will be given too much kindness and protection outside the home and not be allowed to grow up as independent individuals.

The main purpose of the auxiliary, she said, is to give parents of little, little people an opportunity to exchange ideas with one another and learn from each other's experiences.

"The youngsters, as a group, are very average," Mrs. Reckendorf said. "There are some who are of exceptional intelligence, most are average and a few below average — just as in any other group of children." She noted that there is much parents can gain by this association.

The meeting was attended by members from as far away as Great Falls, Mont. This is a good indication of the importance of the organization to those who belong. It also indicates that there is a definite purpose and goal that will be attained — the right of each individual to be judged by their accomplishments and not their height. It's a "tall goal" but they are a determined group.

## Calendar

### KELSO Monday

FOE Auxiliary — 7:30 p.m., FOE Hall; family fun night.

Beta Rho Chapter, ESA — 8 p.m., Mrs. Ken Kulm's, 2018 Burcham St., model meeting; Mrs. Bob Ruth, co-hostess.

White Shrine Social Club — 7:30 p.m., Lincoln First Federal Savings and Loan, 408 Oak St.

Pythian Sisters — 8 p.m., Masonic Temple.

### LONGVIEW Monday

Chapter BN, PEO — 1 p.m., Mrs. F. L. Foval's, 1408 20th Ave.; Mrs. Murray Mason, assisting hostess.

Verdinna Toastmistress Club — 7 a.m., Monticello Hotel.

### SHIRTWAIST RETURNS

The shirtwaist has done it again. This time it returns with the look of an Edwardian dandy. The collars are broadened but softer, sleeves longer, often ruffled jabots. Belts definitely circle the waistline but there are a dew available in button-all-the-way down shift style.



### TIME OUT FOR FUN

While the adults tended to the serious business at hand, the 'little, little people', as children everywhere will do, found time for games and play. Their parents were attending District 11 meeting of the Little People of America.

38\*\*\*\*The VANCOUVER SUN: Tues., Dec. 19, 1967

## Little People Flock to Party

TORONTO (CP) — When the Little People of Canada swung into their Christmas party Saturday night at a downtown hotel, everything was a little more crowded than their first party two years ago.

The Little People, all under four feet 10, started as a club in 1965 with four members. There now are 50 members from Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia.

They banded together for fellowship and to find answers to problems of jobs, clothes and accommodation.



DR. ALVAREZ SAYS:

# Little Help for Short Child

BY WALTER ALVAREZ  
Released, 1966, by Register and Tribune Syndicate

I have just returned from Buffalo, N.Y., where I attended an interesting meeting of a group of fine, generous lay people and able doctors, all of them concerned with the problem of helping those many children who are not growing well. Some of them at the age of 8 are only as big as if they were 5, and hence at the age of 18 they may be about as big as if they were 9.

Obviously, a lad who is only 4 feet tall is going to be terribly handicapped and unhappy for the rest of his life, and hence everything possible should be done to make him grow as he should. Parents of such children are so distressed that many write me asking if there isn't somewhere a medicine that will make their child grow. Sadly, I have to answer that there is, but there is so very little of it available that only a very few children can be treated.

It is called "pituitary growth hormone," and it was isolated many years ago in the California laboratory of Prof. Herbert Evans, who was working with the Chinese chemist, Dr. Li. When the doctors injected some of this hormone into little dachshunds, they grew and grew until they became great big hounds.

## Glandular Adult

We doctors have known for years that the huge circus giant with his big jaw, big nose, big hands and feet, and hoarse voice, got that way because of an overproduction of growth hormone in a tiny tumor, which for a while, during the fellow's boyhood, grew in the very important pituitary gland which lies at the base of the brain.

Naturally, as soon as the doctors saw what the hormone could do, they rejoiced to think what wonderful things it could do for slow-growing children. But soon they ran into disappointment, because growth hormone made from the pituitaries of dogs or steers would not work for boys or girls. Only the growth hormone that was made from human pituitary glands would help children. Unfortunately, a man's pituitary gland is only as big as a pea, and hence a chemist must have some 200 pituitaries in order to make enough growth hormone with which to treat one boy daily for a year!

With difficulty, Dr. Li was able to secure enough human pituitaries with which to treat 10 dwarfed boys, and they were greatly helped.

Now, Dr. Li has shown that the growth hormone of a man is a huge molecule which consists of a chain of 188 amino acids (chemical compounds). Because the putting together of such a huge molecule would be very difficult, the hope has been that Dr. Li will find a small fraction of the big molecule that will do the work of stimulating growth.

In the meantime, a group of devoted and dedicated men and women have formed the National Pituitary Agency — 1900 McElderry St., Baltimore, Md., 21205—an organiza-

tion that is raising money with which to pay for the labor of gathering human pituitary glands, removed at autopsies. These glands are sent to Baltimore, where chemists remove the growth hormone.

Most of the kind people who help in this merciful work are pathologists who perform autopsies. After they have lifted out the brain to study it, it is easy

for them to remove the tiny pituitary gland.

*For information about the thyroid gland send for Dr. Alvarez' helpful booklet "Thyroid Troubles and Goiters." To obtain your copy send 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. LAT, Box 957, Des Moines, Iowa 50304.*

Sat.-Sun., Oct. 21-22, 1967

LONGVIEW DAILY NEWS

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## DELEGATES CONVENE

Members of the Little People of America of District 11 met at the R. L. Vining residence in Kelso recently. Shown, from left to right, are Joe Alexander, district president; Mrs. Alexander; Mrs. Thomas Barta; Mrs. Vining and Mr. Vining, host couple for the meeting.



## 'The Little People' Form Area Chapter

# Looking Life In Eye Keeps Their Chins Up

Register Staff Reporter

EAST HAVEN —My editor had a funny look on his face and I knew right away something was cooking.

"Got a good feature for you," he said, "the Little People of America are having a party and they want a reporter to cover it."

"So who are the little people?" I asked, unwrapping my long legs from around the typewriter chair, knowing from the delighted grin on his face I was going to have a problem keeping my elbows out of people's eyes.

Even before I had a chance to swing into my routine of why I couldn't cover a story on Sunday, I knew from the patient look that settled on his face he wasn't going to listen.

There were no cars parked in front of 536 Thompson Ave., East Haven, when I arrived there Sunday. Plenty of them across the street. Maybe they all went home early, I hoped. I rang the doorbell.

The door swung open and no one was there.

"How do you do," said a voice from down there. I looked down all of me and discovered the voice was coming from a tiny woman with blonde hair and a

friendly welcoming smile. She was no more than four feet, 10 inches tall.

Suddenly I was surrounded by smiling "Little People of America." Forty of them. And a couple of hours later I had com-

pletely forgotten the Little People of America were so little and I was so tall.

The host and hostesses, Mr. and Mrs. Dominic DeCelle, led me to a room upstairs for a quick briefing. The people downstairs, they told me, were

organizing a New Haven area chapter of a national club, the Little People of America, Inc., all of them were under four feet ten inches tall and medically speaking, were classified as dwarfs or midgets.

See LITTLE CLUB Page 2



Register Reporter Dee Burghardt interviews Sherry Hockstadt, left, of Bridgeport; Linda Pomeroy of Keene, N.H., second from left, and Mr. and Mrs. Dominic DeCelle of East Haven.

THE NEW HAVEN REGISTER, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1968

## LITTLE CLUB

(Continued from Page 1)

The general purpose of the club, I was told, was to provide fellowship, interchange of ideas, solutions to the unique problems for a short person and to provide moral support. All this is accomplished through a national convention, district meeting, news letters and informal meetings between individuals.

Although members seek encouragement and support from others, who for one reason or another are considerably smaller in stature than most people, the subject, that weighs most heavily on their minds and is of obtaining employment. More of constant concern to them, is ten than not, prospective employers refuse to take them seriously.

"If we apply for the same job that a guy six feet tall applies for, there's not much chance of our getting it," said DeCelle, a draftsman by trade, who is employed at Sikorsky's.

"And if, by some chance, we are hired, we must work twice as hard as the normal fellow."

The Little People maintain life for them isn't as bitter as many would make it appear. The single most important thing toward their realizing self-acceptance, they said, is their parents' attitude toward them.

"We weren't treated any differently from our brothers and sisters," Mr. and Mrs. DeCelle said.

"Our parents pushed us out into the world just the same. We had to do the same things the others did."

Some Little People are not so fortunate, they said.

Teachers came in for high praise from the Little People. Encouragement and praise flowed from the teachers, helping the youngsters toward the realization there was no limit to the size of their minds.

Most of the Little People drive specially equipped cars with hand-controlled headlights, dimmer switches, built-up accelerators and brake pedals.

Clothes aren't too much of a problem, they explained. Some of the men buy boy's huskies, while the women merely find it necessary to shorten their dresses.

The biggest problems encountered in the big world is being mistaken for children—and not being taken seriously. Adults, they claim, are usually kind and courteous. Young children very often make curious remarks, much to the acute embarrassment of the parents.

The constant threat of unemployment haunts even the educated. Take Peter Valuckas, a Fairfield University graduate, who hopes to complete work for his master's degree. Peter wonders how he will do teaching a classroom full of high school students. If he gets a job.

Some of the Little People go into show business. However, one of the aims of the national organization is to try to show others that club members are capable of more than being circus freaks and clowns.

One of the members, Frieda Betsky of Queens, New York, was one of the original dwarfs in the 1938 movie "The Wizard of Oz."

A sense of humor is invaluable. Linda Pomeroy of Keene, N.H., admits to giving wide berths to department store Santa Clauses because she has been mistaken for a child so often.

It was Linda who pinpointed the Little People's attitude toward big people giving them a helping hand. Waiting for a bus, for instance. How does a little person take that big step from the curb into the bus? Well, often the driver assists.

"After all," Linda said laughing, "If I took offense at his helping, I'd still be standing there waiting for the bus."

And it takes a big person to laugh the way DeCelle does when he tells the story of the day he "got so boiling mad" at another co-worker he slipped off the stool he was sitting on and fell right into a waste paper basket.

Another observation by a member: "A small person can live in two worlds—a small world and a normal world. A person who finds happiness in both worlds has nothing to lose to society or himself."





**JOE ALEXANDER**, a Goldendale teacher as well as district chairman of the Little People of America, recently received the Golden Acorn award for outstanding achievement in education. It was presented by 6' 3" Principal Harold Oxwang. This view illustrates one of the problems of the Little People of America—the constant need to look up.

### Billy Barty's Son Injured

Braden Barty, 6-year-old son of entertainer Billy Barty, has been struck by a car in a North Hollywood crosswalk.

The boy darted into the street at the corner of Moorpark Avenue and Kraft Street and was hit by a car driven by a 30-year-old North Hollywood woman. Young Barty suffered a broken left thigh and was held overnight for observation at Riverside Hospital.

1968

### Prepare for a Small Population Growth

## Meeting of 'Little People' coming to Goldendale

Joe Alexander is pretty well known around Goldendale. As a speech therapist, he has worked with children from many families in our public schools. As an active member of Goldendale Jaycees, he has participated in many public affairs and club projects. As a citizen of the city and the area, he is well known by many as "that little fellow with a big smile and quick sense of humor."

Joe is about as tall standing up as most of us are sitting down. He is the shortest member of a family of normal-sized persons, whose home is at Parkdale, Ore. He is married, and with his "also-short" wife, Martha, and their two normal-sized children, lives a normal life as a Goldendale resident. To observe them, it is easy to accept them as neighbors, and to assume that even though they are smaller in stature, people who are undersize have no more problems than anyone else and live normal and happy lives. However, this is not always the way it is for some "Little People."

It isn't that size alone is a great handicap. Joe and Martha drive a car that's full size (with accessory pedals), live in a house that's full size (with floors elevated in certain areas). Even clothing is no great problem. But if Joe had not been fortunate enough to have received adequate training to become a skilled teacher, he might find it difficult to get a job to support his family. And if he hadn't been fortunate in his youth, in the treatment his parents gave him, he could have ended up with serious psychological blocks, or traits which which would make him less acceptable to you and me. He and Martha (who worked for the government in an ASC office and in other office work) have been very fortunate. They have worked hard to overcome obstacles, but they started out with loving parents who wisely taught them self-reliance. Many other "little people" have not been so fortunate. Because of this fact, an organization called "Little People of America" was formed by TV star Billy Barty, about 1957.

Little People of America held its first national convention in 1960 at Las Vegas, with 100 members in attendance. It has grown now to about 900 members, organized in 12 district groups. In the field of undersized children the club feels a concern and an obligation that is huge, and so there is a subsidiary organization called "the Parents Auxiliary."

The general purpose of the organization—referred to as the LPA—is to provide fellowship, interchange of ideas, solutions to the unique problems of a little person, and moral support. This is done through the annual national convention, once- or twice-a-year district conventions or meetings, district and national newsletters, local chapter meetings and informal or impromptu private meetings between individuals.

Some members are interested mostly in the social aspect. Some are almost too shy, and shun any public appearance, save in their own circle. Others are "hams" and love the limelight. But the majority recognize the need to help each other, combatting the "carnival atmosphere" which prevents their serious acceptance, or in bolstering and stimulat-

ing self-reliance which they all need to develop.

What do Little People do? Of course, there are specialized jobs made to order for them, such as the aircraft riveter jobs which appeared with mass aircraft production in World War II. Many plane parts were too small to get inside of, yet too large to merely reach into. Little People were often able to crawl inside and do the necessary work. However, Little People more often work as accountants, artists, clerks, secretaries, lawyers, watchmakers, draftsmen, TV repairmen, barbers, salesmen, engineers, bankers, civil service employees, and many other professions.

"Little People" are more numerous than one might suppose. Joe says that the rate of frequency is one in 10,000 for persons classed as "medical dwarfs," an affliction with quite logical, however involved, explanation. The district chairman also says that among the greatest enjoyments of the district meetings is the ability to meet and associate with people on the "same eye level" as themselves (a relief from the inclined head and looking upward).

Joe Alexander says, "We are fighting a sort of segregation problem—and it's the top two feet of you people we're fighting!"

By now, you understand about Little People of America. It so happens that Joe Alexander is chairman of District 11, LPA, which includes some 70 or more members in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska, Montana and Wyoming. They will hold their District 11 Spring meeting in Goldendale, April 6 and 7. Although many Little People have very limited means and traveling is expensive, Joe expects between 40 and 50 of his members to be here. They will stay at motels or in the homes of friends or volunteer hosts. They will make the Alexander home their headquarters, but they will hold meetings at the Oasis Cafe on Saturday. They will hold a bowling party at Golden Lanes during the afternoon, and spend a little time sight-seeing in the area that afternoon. Saturday evening they will hold a banquet at the Goldendale Country Club (7 p.m.). Following the business meeting, a movie on the activities of Little People will be shown, and musical entertainment will be put on by members, topped off by dancing. An afghan knitted by Mrs. Stan Malecki will be offered as a prize for the occasion.

Sunday morning will be a get-together time for early risers, at the Alexander and Malecki homes. Others will attend church, or sleep late, to meet informally for coffee and brunch before departing by mid-day for their homes.

In addition to the Alexanders, other LPA members here include Mrs. Malecki and her son Jim, and Miss Angie Albrecht. Miss Albrecht teaches foreign languages and Eighth Grade at Wishram Elementary School. Jim Malecki, who works for the State Game Department on its game farm near Centralia, is expected home for the occasion.

Several local families, including the Ellingsons of Goldendale and the Hinshaws of Centerville, are expected to play host to the visitors.



# 'Snow White' Muny Premiere Big Success

By FRANK HUNTER  
Globe Democrat

Motion Picture Editor

They say the proper way to raise children is to see that they get everything ha's coming to them, both good and bad. Therefore we recommend "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," the closing kiddie spectacular at the Municipal Opera and a premiere production of the Walt Disney musical. With some reservations about the total impact of the production prior to the entrance of the mini-men, it would seem that the enchanting story of an exiled princess hiding out in the woodies with a flock of frisky gnomes might otherwise give the tots a bigger lift than a quart of Gatorade. To get things moving, though, couldn't something be done with a pair of editing shears to a script which spends too much time establishing the fact that the queen is mean, the king is a boob, and Snow White a flawless, virginal princess dressed in white linen?

PERHAPS ALL THIS exposition would have seemed less time-consuming had the first 40 minutes not been shattered with the sound of dropped props, the irritation of muffled light cues and entrances, and the matter of actors occasionally stepping on each other's lines.

The stage version of the 1937 Disney cartoon feature has additional music and lyrics by Joe Cook and Muny conductor Jay Blackton with a book by Joe Cook. Glenn Jordan produced and directed the show which stars Patricia Wise as Snow White, Marthe Errolle in the role of the wicked stepmother and Frank Porretta as the handsome prince who restores a sleeping beauty to life after the poor thing unwittingly bites

into a poisoned apple.

THE MUNY'S "Snow White" is reputedly the most expensive musical to have been produced in Forest Park and it looks like it judging from the special effects and costumes (although the verbose magic mirror on the wall, with a pea green face and blood red lips, is virtually incomprehensible thanks to some electronic hang-up that makes the dire predictions sound like mutterings from the inside of a pewter pitcher). Designer C. Murawski has created his own weather — rain, mist, thunder, lightning — and the famous enchanted forest is a leafy gathering of luminescent magical trees that walk and turn from good to bad.

Magic arrows zip hither and thither, a flying spider picks its way through the air on a silken web, the witches' laboratory looks like Dr. Frankenstein's and animals popping in and out, include a hawk, a burro, a white stallion, even a few loathsome crocodiles.

The dwarf's stunning makeup is the work of John ("Planet of the Apes") Chambers of the 20th Century Fox studios.

So, apart from a dull beginning virtually devoid of humor, you can be assured there are enough gimmicks available to amuse all but the most mulish or blasé tot.

## THE OPERA VERSION

proves the continuing popularity of the Disney fable since it fairly well suits its creator's Grimm-like imagination. The show offers a varied group of comedians in the dwarf roles. For the record the tiny guys are Dopey (Billy Barty) Happy (Emory Souza) Sneezy (Samuel Goldstein) Sleepy (Jerry Maren) Doc (Don Potter) Bashful (Frank Delfino) and Grumpy (Robert Weil). They are, to a man, hilariously inventive fellows, whistling while they work and arguing about who is Snow White's favorite and who will get to do what household chores like cloroxing the tub or whatever people did back in the sticks in those days.

Patricia Wise, coloratura soprano of the New York City Opera, is a shimmering Snow White and will be fondly remembered for the way she handles such lovelies as "I'm Wish-

ing" and "Someday My Prince Will Come" which I have always thought really belonged in a Noel Coward drawing room comedy of the 1930s.

Marthe Errolle's vain and jealous queen, who never seems to get the right answer from the talkative mirror on the wall, is o.k. Frank Porretta, whose tender kiss gets S.W. out of her glass coffin and ready to set up housekeeping, is a princely tenor, tall and handsome and sex appealing in the Round Table sort of way.

Laurie Main is excellent as Snow White's dad, the widowed and kindly king who should never have remarried since he and his new wife are as much alike as a royal yacht and a coal barge.

THE NEW TUNES composed by Messrs Cook and Blackton are just adequate—"Welcome to the Kingdom" which introduces the ladies and gentlemen of the court; "That's What They Say," sung by Joan Schiller in the role of Luna; "Here's the Happy Ending" which revels in

the show's happy ending; "The Very First Dance" and "Will I Ever See Her Again" in which the Prince, after a brief encounter with Snow White, worries aloud about her whereabouts.

"Snow White" will run for two weeks and closes the Forest Park theater's 51st season Aug. 31 and things have been in dead earnest all the way. Only occasionally has there been some agony beneath the skin which has made this job seem a trade like any other.

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## 'Little People' hold district meet here

By Pete May

Although it was a personal event in the lives of a group of people, the meeting of Little People of America in Goldendale last weekend also was a matter of community interest. Because of this, those of us who were privileged to get detailed glimpses of this unusual (for us) occurrence wish to share it with you, the reader.

We met them (the Little People) at the

Joe Alexander home, at the bowling lanes, at their banquet and social event Saturday evening. We found the 38 LPA members to be, without exception, jolly and full of fun, and greatly enjoying company made up largely of others like themselves. (It's good to be able to associate with others your own size, we learned, and this accounts for the success of their meetings, more than any other factor.)

DISTRICT 11 LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA who met in semi-annual meeting in Goldendale last week are shown in this picture, taken at Goldendale Country Club. The 38 shown here vary from "Little Littles" to middle age.

On meeting them and becoming acquainted, we learned they range from 3½ feet to 4½ feet (4'10" or less) in height, as adults. Their short stature is the result of several different types of handicap. Most of those in Goldendale Saturday are known as achondroplastics, meaning that they are small simply because their legs and arms have never grown in length in proportion to their bodies. Because they have short legs, they don't get very high off the ground, and because they have short arms, they are limited in how high they can reach. There are a number of other types, including pituitary dwarfs, whose entire

growth rate has been very slow. This results in well-proportioned bodies which never achieve natural size. (One such man told Joe Alexander he had grown until he reached the age of 45.)

Although the LPA members who came to Goldendale numbered only 38, another 24 normal-sized persons were on hand for the semi-annual district meeting, too. They are either members of the Parents Auxiliary, or spouses of married LPs. (Most Little People find it best to marry other LPs, and the children of such unions are as apt to be nor-

(Continued on Page 4)



# 'Little People' hold district meet here

(Continued from Page 1)

mal in size as to be dwarfed.) The full-sized parents of "Little Littles" (as children who are destined to be dwarfed are called) in particular have found that they have a great opportunity for service as an auxiliary group, both to the LPs and to themselves.

"The most difficult thing was facing the knowledge that my son would never attain full growth," one parent said. "The next was breaking the news to my family and friends." As the parents met in separate convention, they talked over these problems and offered advice to each other—also studied the different features of each case described to them.

"We have tried very hard to avoid being overprotective," said one couple. "Our little boy has learned to do things for himself, and to be self-reliant."

Other parents had other bits of advice, or experience, to relate. However, the chairman, Mrs. Frank Reckendorff of Corvallis, Or., said: "We expected to get together to talk over our problems. But we find we really don't have problems. Of course, our children can do some things well and can't do some others. But we find they adjust so well and get along so well that we really don't have anything to complain about—we do have much to be thankful for—we just don't have problems."

When the Little People went to Golden Lanes for their fun session, they took over half of the lanes and proceeded to have a time that must surely have resembled Rip Van Winkle's experience with the diminutive bowlers on the green. Regardless of high or low scores, everyone had fun; everyone was considerate of every other. In some cases, the balls were almost as heavy as the bowlers, it seemed, and no great speed could be put into the delivery. But they managed to show certain skills, and the enjoyment of good fun together.

The same spirit came out at the dance which followed the evening banquet, meeting and entertainment. There were good dancers and those for whom it was an effort, yet most of them participated, regardless of degree of success.

A high point of the evening was the showing of a movie, partly made at the Los Angeles national convention, which tells the story of Little People and their organization. During the showing of this film it became apparent that Little People do not waste time lamenting their mutual problems, but are quick to see the humor in their view of the world. They laugh with, not at, each other. They don't exactly laugh at Big People, though as their film showed, there are many laughable things to be seen from hip-pocket or mini-skirt level.

One of the Little People shown in the film is an inventor and craftsman. In his machine shop in California he builds pedal extension for any car made. "Just tell him the make and model, and he'll send you the proper accessories to operate it," they say. He also makes several handy gadgets to aid LPs.

One such is the extension arm demonstrated by Frieda Groeneveld. "Handy for pulling items off the shelf in stores, or in the kitchen cupboards," she said as she removed hers from her handbag. It telescopes to about 8" in length, extends to about 24". It's made of aluminum. On the end is a small hook, and a rubber knob. This combination can be removed and a telephone dialer attached.

This clever device has a removable knob about the size of a finger. When it is removed, a dime can be inserted and held in the end. The LP then reaches up with his extension handle, pokes the dime-holding end into the slot in the pay phone and pushes. The dime is

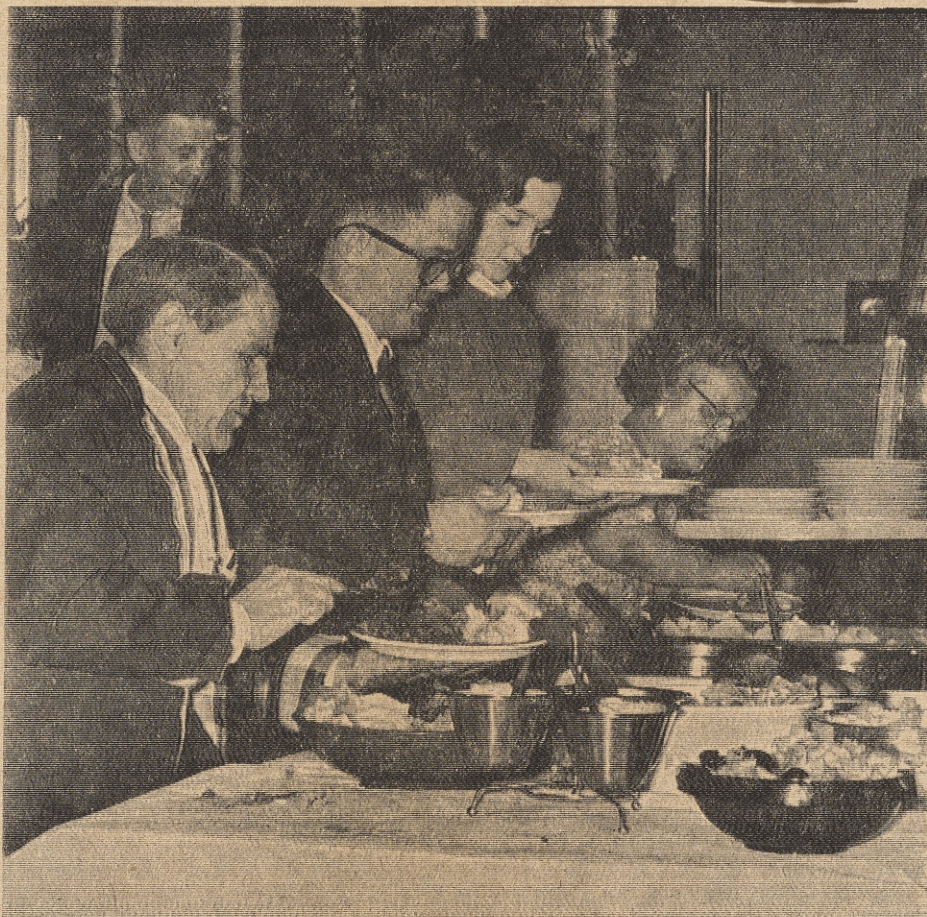
forced in, drops down, and the dial tone may be heard. Then the dial-finger tip is quickly inserted and the dialing done by push-pulling on the handle. You wouldn't have suspected that using a pay-phone could be so complicated, would you?

The extension handle also is useful for poking buttons in self-service elevators. This was fine with the old elevators—but some of the newer ones react to warmth of the finger, rather than the push itself. So in this case, the Little Person holds the aluminum dialing tip of the handle to his mouth and blows his breath on it until he has warmed it enough to make the button work. He grins as he tells you, to signify that "you can do anything, once you know how!"

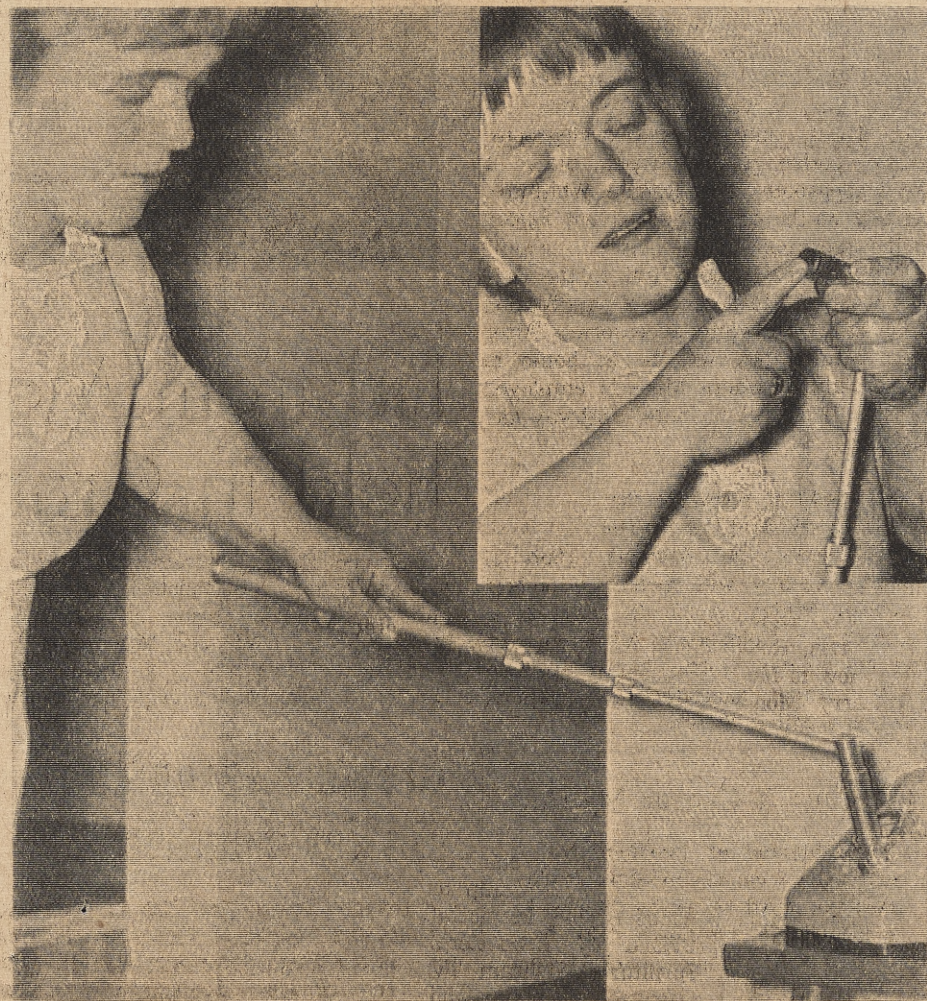
By now, you understand that "living little" requires a bag of tricks up the sleeve; also that LPs appreciate help. They were especially pleased at the table, 28 inches high, which caterer John Foster had rigged for their food at their buffet dinner. When Joe Alexander asked: "Did you ever try to ladle gravy from a dish at eye level and two feet back from the table's edge?" it became apparent that a low serving table is necessary.

But it was when I offered to hang a coat for a Little Lady at the clubhouse that I first caught on. That gal couldn't have reached the closet hanger-rod if she'd been on stilts. As the guests arrived, I found I had a steady job, hanging miniature coats on a very high rod. And when I took pictures, I took them from knee-level. After the evening was over, I almost felt like I belonged to the Little People. I knew it was handier to be my natural size, but it almost seemed happier to be little.

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SERVING THEMSELVES AT BUFFET BANQUET are LPA members Harold Erdman, Spokane; Dick McLeod, Puyallup; Miss Angie Albrecht, Wishram, and Mrs. Stan Malecki, Goldendale. Mr. Malecki is in background at left.



"THIS IS WHERE THE DIME FITS," says Frieda Groeneveld (inset) in demonstrating use of the extension handle for telephone dialing. It is really intended for use with a booth phone, or wall phone, also for reaching articles on high shelves.



# Happy 'Little People' Stand Ten-Foot Tall 1968

By ETHEL BECKWITH  
Of The Herald

Two "little people" of Bridgeport will volunteer as subjects in the special clinic at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore in research started there into one of the mysteries of life. Dwarf is the common word. Doctors call it Achondroplasm.

Sherry Hochstadt and her father, of 107 Spring St., who would do anything in this cause, have accepted the invitation to undergo analysis next fall. The hope is that science will find a method to prevent Achondroplasm.

Eighteen-year-old Sherry, meanwhile, is busy as president of the new Connecticut Chapter of the Little People of America (LPA). She went as one small member to a regional conference in Pittsburgh and came back with a 10-foot-tall job as state chief.

It was startling to hear from the Hochstadts, when I coffeed with them last night at their large apartment in East Bridgeport, that there are 2½ million in the United States, born the same way they were.

They are bright and cordial as anyone else. They are variously skilled. Yet, they suffer from "the high visibility" of negroes. They are instantly "different." They are exposed to cruel remarks not only by children but grownups. They are happiest "among our own."

That is why Sherry is bent on getting every living LPA, as she calls them, into the national association. It is one way of fighting the peculiar loneliness of their world.

Among their own they dance, romance, bowl — Sherry and dad have a shelf full of bowling trophies. Because they are among friends, they enjoy extraordinary laughs, enough to bring home and talk over until the next party. They're having a big beach party July 6 at Sherwood Island in Westport. The emcee will be Al Altieri who used to announce "Philip Mor-riss."

It will be news to most people that the LPA has an adoption center and a scholarship fund, and now comes the best news — the Hopkins pioneering research. The Hochstadts told of romances in the group, of some having normal-sized children.

Sherry has found exactly the work she likes,

teaching retarded children at Kennedy Regional Center on Virginia Ave. Her widowed father Philip Hochstadt is a bench assembler at Sikorsky. A fellow LPA at the same plant is Dominick Celie, a draftsman who recently was married to an LPA.

Mr. Hochstadt feels deeply for the more than 2,000,000 who like him, have been mysteriously deprived of normal height.

## TALL BROTHER

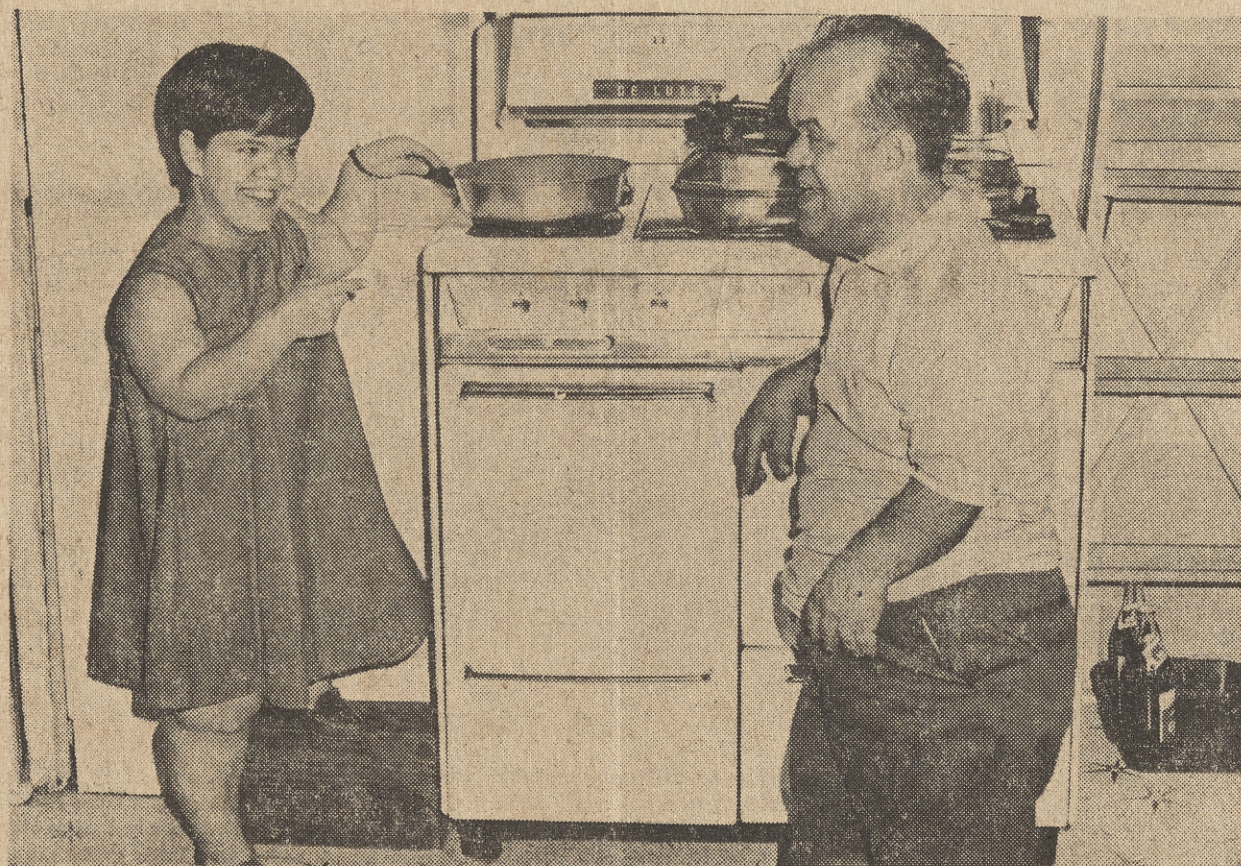
He was born 58 years ago in Roumania, the only LPA among six children. He has a brother

more than six feet tall. He said.

"Since we joined the association we haven't had a dull minute. Every weekend we go places, drive to a party or bowl or play baseball. Sherry and I want to see every last LPA in this state, join up with us."

Sherry attended Roosevelt School and is a 1967 graduate of Bassick High School. Like her dad, she has a hearty sense of humor. When asked, "How did it happen that you were elected president?" she replied:

"I guess I just opened my mouth! I told them



AT HOME THEY LAUGH . . . Sherry Hochstadt and father Philip exchange jokes while she prepares supper. These photos by Dennis O'Neil are part of first

in-depth story of "The Little People." Though they have their problems among the tall, they have fun "when among o'n own," the Hochstadts said.

it was time we had a Connecticut chapter and first thing I knew it was elected and so was I."

## LITTLE DOLLS

No one in LPA is more than four-feet-10. Since Bridgeport is the birthplace of the world's most famous midget, Sherry was asked whether any Tom Thums belong. She said, "Yes, we have quite a few of those little dolls."

Sherry said that the late Diane Wiener was told two weeks after birth that Sherry would be "Little People." Perhaps there will be no such births after the study at Johns Hopkins.

We discussed some well known Little People: — Richard F. Flaherty of Stamford, who literally fought his way to get into the army and now is a lieutenant in Vietnam; Peter Valuckas of Coleman St., Bridgeport, who is a student at Fairfield U, and of course Michael Dunn, the philosophic dwarf of the movie "Ship of Fools." So far, Sherry says, Dunn has refused to join the LPA. Flaherty by the way, is 4 foot 9.

The lieutenant is of course the pride and joy of the LPA. He was underweight as well as undersized. Because he persisted, the army told him he would have to put on 100 pounds. He did that, by eating six meals a day.

Now with the 101st Airborne Div. in the war, Flaherty is exactly in the spot he dared to dream about. From all accounts he is proud to be known as "the smallest guy in the whole army." In addition he is a karate expert.

He is the son of real estate agent Walter T. Flaherty of 21 Park St., Stamford. To hear about him we told Sherry, was to believe that anything is possible. "Sure, that's our prize story," she said.

Phil then hopped into his car to drive the reporter back. "We all love to drive," he said. "We get rid of a lot of frustration that way."

"Well, there's always somebody worse off, if you look around," Sherry said. "The kids I take care of — there's another trick of nature — are almost all Mongolian."

One thing the LPA frowns on is use of its members for midget shows, etc., especially when the plan is to make other people laugh at them.



# Little People

*The attitude of the family of a dwarf child influences how he will accept his size and role in society. There is as much for the family to adjust to as there is for the child.*

No obstacle—like driving a car—is too great for the “little people” to overcome, says Mrs. George T. Cromwell Jr., right. Her large sedan is fitted with extensions and a cushion.



Oren Douglas “Peanut” Forrester, a tall dwarf at 4 feet, 8 inches, talks with a fellow Gifford-Hill employee. “Here they expect me to do the same work as anyone else but they told me I could modify equipment to suit my needs,” explained the Lancaster resident, below right.



Call them “little people,” call them dwarfs, but don’t call them midgets.

“Most people associate midgets with freaks in sideshows and the circus and we’re not freaks,” declared Nancy Kelley, 26, the diminutive president of the 60-member Dallas-Fort Worth Chapter of Little People of America.

Mrs. George T. Cromwell Jr., at 4 feet, 4 inches, is taller than most dwarfs. “For a long time I didn’t want to admit I was a dwarf,” said the 27-year-old housewife. “I used to tell my parents, ‘I don’t want to associate with THOSE midgets.’ It sounds stupid now.”

**MISS KELLEY**, a secretary to a Fort Worth CPA firm, explained that her parents never mentioned dwarf or midget to her unless she raised the subject. “Talking about my size wasn’t taboo,” she said, “but I never knew exactly what a dwarf was until I joined the Little People three years ago.”

Some people, the women said, believe dwarfs aren’t capable of doing the things normal-size people can do. “Our brains aren’t affected or any less smart,” they said.

“We’re just small, that’s all.”

Some parents keep their dwarf children hidden from the world and bring in private tutors for school lessons because they do not know how to live with their children, who are different. But not the Dick McSpeddens of 9921 Chippendale.

**THE OLDEST OF THEIR** three daughters, Mary Ellen, 10, is a dwarf. The entire family has learned about dwarfism and Mary Ellen tells you immediately with typical child-like pride and candor that she’s the only “little people” in her school.

“We have never avoided the word ‘dwarf’ in our family,” said Mrs. McSpedden, “because it will be easier for all of us if Mary Ellen grows up knowing the word and what it means.”

Mary Ellen is 43½ inches tall. Her sister, Melissa, 7, is taller but Mary Ellen is still the “boss.” This holds true in the neighborhood where she is the oldest of the younger set.

She skates, climbs trees and will take intermediate swimming lessons this summer. The only thing that seems to frustrate her is that she can’t cross her legs at the knees.

**“MARY ELLEN** is extremely mature in some ways,” said her mother. “She’s a Girl Scout, travels all over the state and is extra independent. Her school work is average; it could be better if she weren’t so busy being interested in other people. She’s compassionate and unaware of herself but very aware of others.”

Mrs. McSpedden offers this advice to parents of dwarfs: Accept the child with open arms; don’t keep quiet about the child’s difference; don’t hide him; use the sometimes sensitive word dwarf; don’t make the child ashamed of what he is; don’t be overly protective.

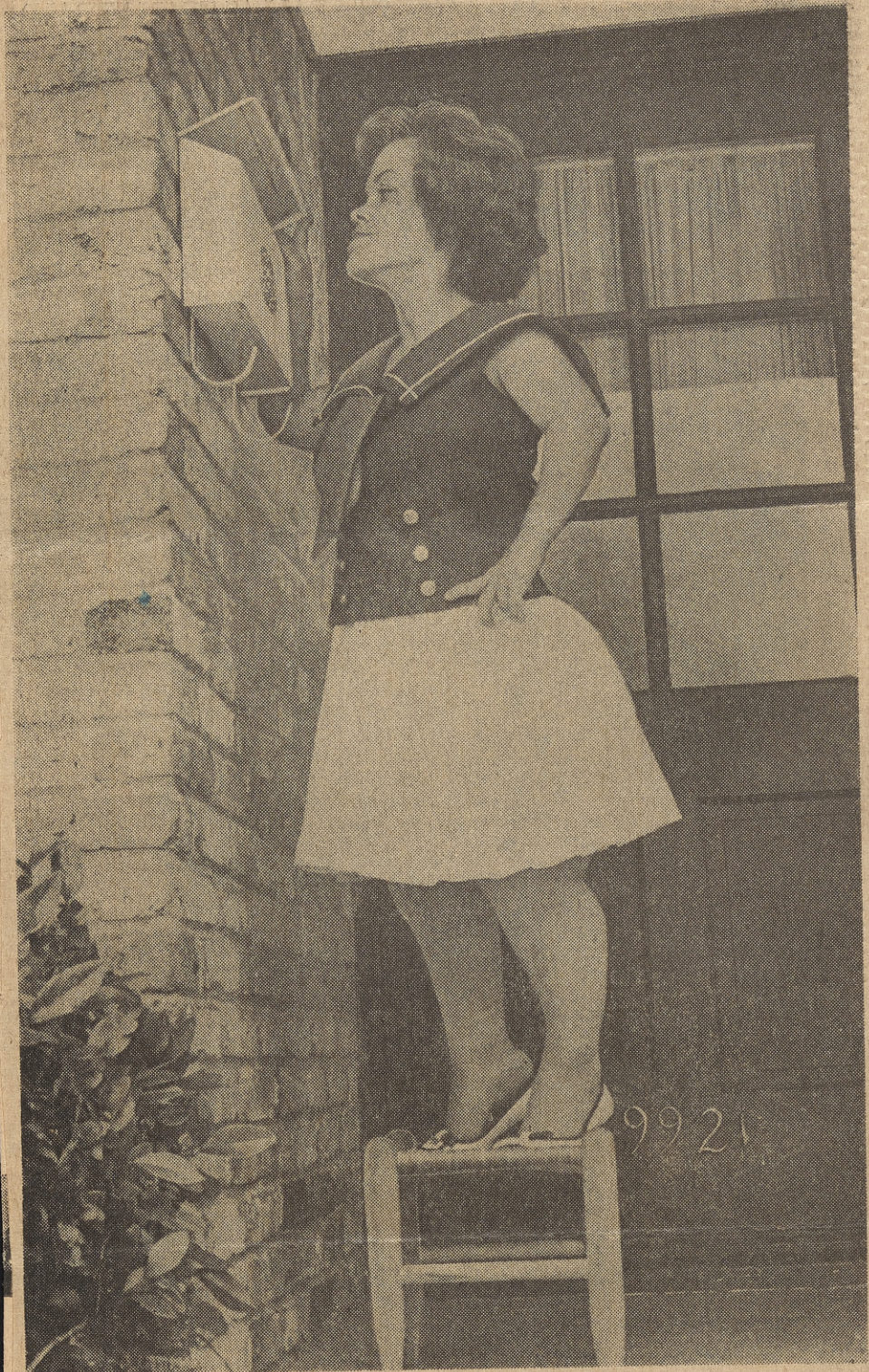
**OREN DOUGLAS** “Peanut” Forrester of Lancaster, another tall dwarf at 4 feet, 8 inches, underscores the advice: Don’t baby the “little people.”

“I was babied all through school by teachers and, while I enjoyed it then, I regret now they were so easy on me,” he said.

As a student at the University of Texas seven years ago, Forrester, a happy bachelor of 27, was student trainer for the Longhorn football team and will return to East Texas

See **LITTLE PEOPLE** on Page 9



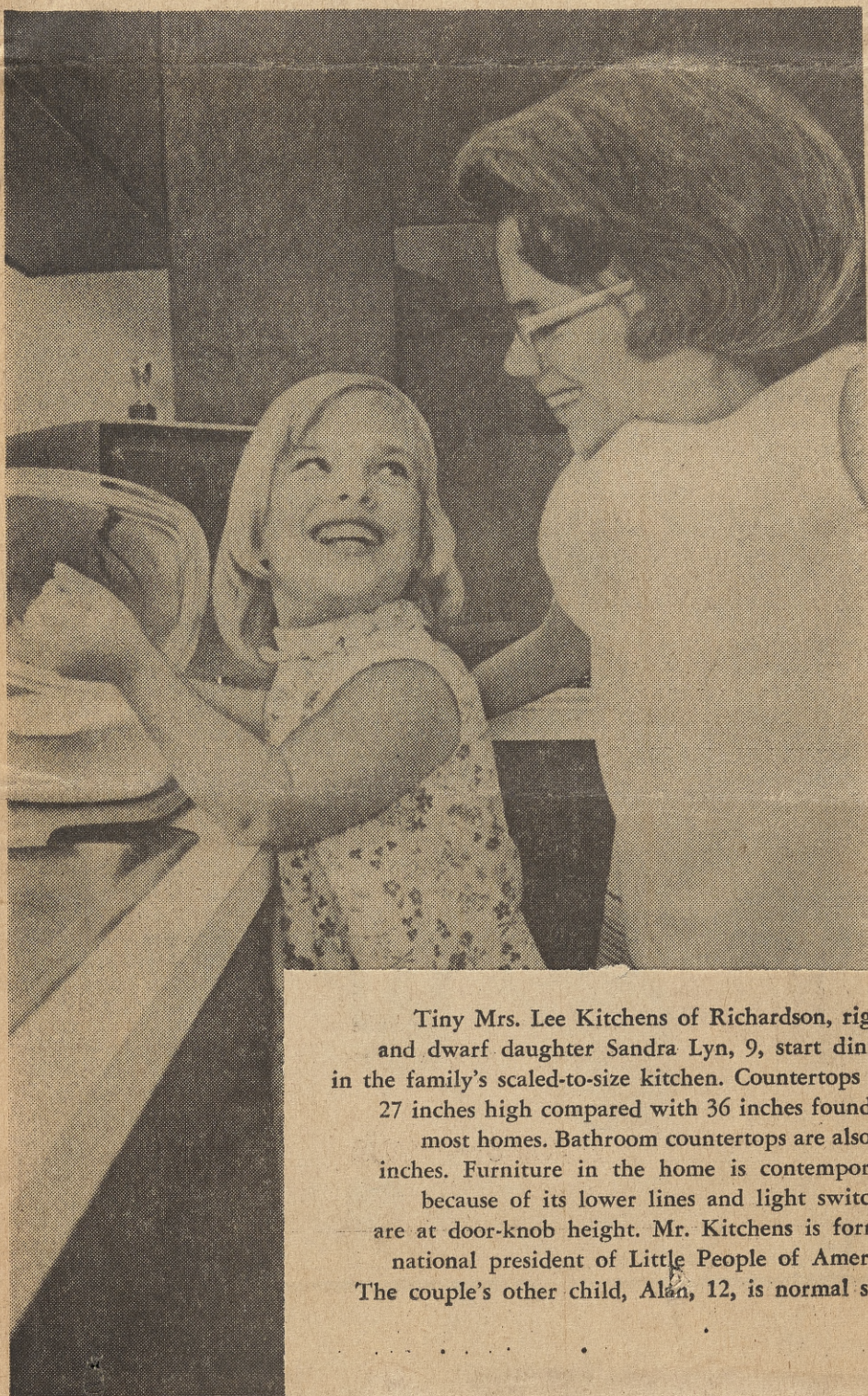


A mail box at average height means the help of a stool for 4-foot, 2-inch Nancy Kelley, president of the Dallas-Fort Worth Chapter of Little People of America.

# Living

THE DALLAS TIMES HERALD  
SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 18, 1969

Mary Ellen McSpedden, 10, may be a head shorter than her sister Melissa, 7, at left, but she's still boss, according to their mother, Mrs. Dick McSpedden. The McSpeddens have studied all aspects of dwarfism and often entertain members of the Dallas-Fort Worth LPA Chapter.



Tiny Mrs. Lee Kitchens of Richardson, right, and dwarf daughter Sandra Lyn, 9, start dinner in the family's scaled-to-size kitchen. Countertops are 27 inches high compared with 36 inches found in most homes. Bathroom countertops are also 27 inches. Furniture in the home is contemporary because of its lower lines and light switches are at door-knob height. Mr. Kitchens is former national president of Little People of America. The couple's other child, Alan, 12, is normal size.







Eddie McIntosh and his miniature bride, formerly Mary Alice Maddox, walking up the aisle after they were married at the Ousley Methodist Church in Decatur.

# Romance of The Little People

By Willard Neal

IT was a most unusual wedding, the bride four feet and five inches tall, the groom four feet and three and a half inches.

The bride marched down the aisle with her tall brother, holding his wrist instead of his arm, which she could not reach.

After the impressive double-ring ceremony—"they're just like dolls," guests whispered—a reception was held in the church's recreation room, where the principals stood on the edge of the stage platform, making them just high enough for guests to kiss the bride.

Then Mr. and Mrs. Eddie McIntosh drove to Miami for their honeymoon, planning to come back and set up housekeeping in Eddie's apartment in Chamblee.

Everything about the little couple's meeting, the whirlwind courtship and the leisurely marriage is storybook material.

Eddie McIntosh had been living as a rather lonely little bachelor in the Chamblee apartment. He usually stopped for breakfast near the office where he works as an accountant in Doraville. One morning the waitress asked if he ever went out with little girls. He said he didn't know any. She said, "Well, I have a friend who is little. Let me give you her number and you call her up."

He called, and she invited him to take her to a meeting of the Atlanta chapter of the Little People of America. He never had heard of the club.

There were about 50 little folks at the

party, but the main one Eddie saw was Mary Alice Maddox. He asked her to dinner and to see the hit movie "Dr. Zhivago."

"But we didn't see the movie," said Mary Alice. "We ate too long—not so much, but a long time. When we came out of the restaurant on Luckie Street it was too late for the show."

There were other dinners and movies, and they discovered they had a number of things in common besides their size. Both liked art and reading and they enjoyed the same kind of music. They won three bottles of champagne singing duets and dancing the Charleston at nightclubs. And they liked each other a lot. One evening Eddie brought over a dozen red roses and vowed positively they would see "Dr. Zhivago."

As soon as they were seated in the movie Mary Alice nudged him with her elbow and whispered, "Don't you have something for me?"

He did, a sparkling diamond which he fitted on her finger right then. "I was sure he had it," she said. "He had already proposed to me and asked mother—finally—and I wasn't about to sit there three hours knowing he had my ring in his pocket!"

The world is a big, bothersome, out-size place, with many obstacles for little people.

Nearly everything presents problems, even buying clothes. Eddie has to have his suits

fortable slacks, but she has to order her size 2A high heels from an Eastern concern with the intriguing name of Cinderella Shoes.

Eddie's apartment where they will live has conventional furnishings. "A number of little people have tried installing small furniture, and if they decided to sell their house, found that they couldn't," said Mary Alice. "I visited a home in North Carolina that had the kitchen arranged to scale. After I finished helping with the cooking and dishwashing at the low stove and sink my back was nearly killing me. At mother's I have a little stool that I kick around the kitchen without even thinking about it, and it puts me at the right level for doing everything."

Automobiles are made big, too. Mary Alice has had only one driving lesson. She borrowed some extensions for the pedals and persuaded her brother to put them on his car. Then he let her drive around and around the vacant parking lot at a plaza for about an hour on Sunday.

Eddie drives a medium-sized car, which means next to the big models. Extensions bring the pedals up almost to the seat. He must be a pretty good driver, for he has received only one ticket. He was breezing down I-75 in north Florida when a police siren signaled for him to pull over.

"Traffic was whizzing past the left door of my car, so I got out the other side and

## Etiquette Altered to Fit

(Continued From Page 23)

"You never saw such a surprised woman — like she thought I'd changed my mind and she'd have me on her hands the rest of her life. Then I explained that the girls at the office advised me to see a wedding consultant, who already knew the answers, to look after details. We called on Mrs. Abigail Phelps and put my life in her hands. That's the only way to be married happily. All I had to do was get my trousseau together and attend the rehearsal."

Alice is a very competent little secretary. But she ran into a job at home that was entirely too much for her. "I had my heart set on a church wedding," she said. "I picked out the church, Ousley Methodist on Candler Road just a block from my home on White's Mill, and asked the Rev. James J. Sneed to perform the ceremony. Then I brought home some etiquette books to learn just how everything should be done. Mother read them, too, and became as confused as I was. There were a million things to do, and a million ways to do them wrong, according to these books. I kept dreading and putting it off until, two months before the date, mother said, 'Hadden't we better get started?'"

"I told her, 'I don't think I'll even begin.'"

At the insurance office Mary

Mary Alice's mother, Mrs. Alice McGuire, helps select the cocktail dress she will wear as an evening gown.



flower girls I'd have to look up to." She managed to find a small boy to carry her train. Two dozen little folks from the club were honored guests. The McIntoshes are starting their married life with a new bedroom suite they bought to-

gether. Eddie has an old suite his parents gave him, which they are going to antique. For the next project, they intend to decorate the entire apartment. And that is about as far as their plans go at the moment.

Some things in the etiquette books did not suit the occasion and Mary Alice improvised, like walking down the aisle holding her brother's wrist. There were no flower girls. "The only children I know are those I used to baby-sit, and they've grown taller than I am," she said. "I didn't want

out laughing. He said he had seen me stop, but couldn't find me anymore, and thought I might be some guy trying to ambush him. The speed limit here is 75 and you were doing 85," he added.

"He got out and looked into my car to see how I had the pedals rigged. He said he wouldn't give me a ticket, but he had radioed a car down the road that he was on my tail, and if he didn't write me one they would stop me."

Eddie and Mary Alice found a few compensations for being small. Both recall that they attended movies on children's tickets until they were 16.

When Mary Alice was 17 she went to a nightclub just to see if she would be thrown out, and nobody even questioned her age.

At the insurance office Mary

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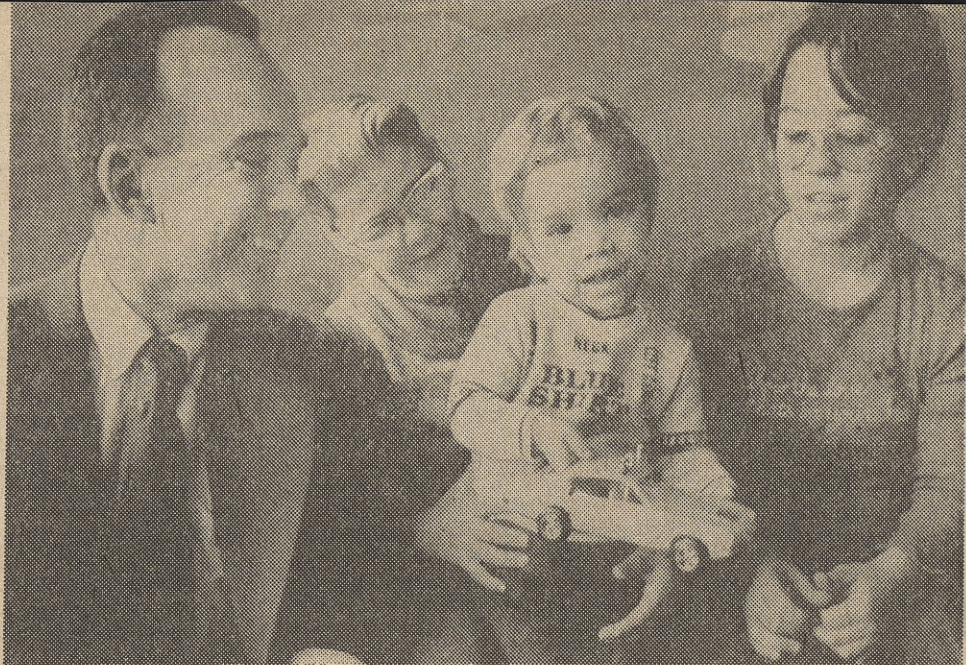
at the insurance office Mary

at the insurance office Mary

at the insurance office Mary







Adam with new family . . . Also love, a home and a place in the world.

## New Family Doesn't Think Small

By Al Frisbie

Adam has found a home.

He found love, too.

And he found a place in the world.

Adam is only 3. And he will never grow very tall. He is one of the world's little people.

Adam was born in Omaha. He has had a foster mother almost since birth.

But Thursday he found a family. His name will be Adam Spector. He will be the son of Robert and Mary Spector and he "inherited" a sister, 13-year-old Sherry.

All of them are little people, too, and they came to Omaha from Lebanon, N.J., to take Adam home.

Robert Spector, 44, is a patent agent who has a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Pennsylvania.

He and Mary adopted Sherry a long time ago. And in 1974, they began talking about adopting another child.

But possibilities were limited. There just aren't that many

little persons available. But there is an organization called the Little People of America, Inc., which is made up of persons no taller than 4 feet 10. It has an adoption service.

Robert Spector wrote asking about children to adopt. There wasn't much choice. There were only five. None lived in New Jersey.

But there was a boy named Adam who was under the supervision of the Nebraska Childrens Home Society in Omaha.

So Spector wrote Harris Van Oort, the director.

Yes, Adam was eligible for adoption. He was alert but there was a problem: He was slow to talk and was receiving attention from a speech therapist.

There was more correspondence, more phone calls — and the machinery that would culminate in adoption began.

Two weeks ago, the Spectors were informed that Adam would be theirs. They flew to Omaha Wednesday and saw their son-to-be for the first time.

It was a happy time for them — and for Adam.

He did not speak. But his smile was trusting and a rapport was established.

But Thursday was the big day. Nebraska Childrens Home staff members would bring Adam to the Spectors at the Airport Ramada Inn. Then the family that had three members when it came, would fly back to New Jersey a family of four.

Mary Spector glanced frequently out the motel lobby window as she talked of her new son and the new life awaiting.

Adam didn't know it then, but before the day was out he would be in his new home. He would have 5½ acres of wooded land to play on and he would be making friends with Snoopy and Blue, the two pet dogs of his new sister, Sherry.

He would have a bedroom in the house that from now on will be known as "Adam's room."

Said Mrs. Spector: "He will fill an empty room — and a place in our hearts."



'LITTLE PEOPLE' GET TOGETHER FOR CHAT AT CONVENTION  
L-R: Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Hawkins, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Duckworth

## Little People Flock Here For a Big Time and Talk

By ACHSAH NESMITH

The Little People are here. They'll be in Atlanta all weekend, mostly to have a good time. It's their biggest meeting of the year.

They began to arrive Friday afternoon for the District 4 meeting of the Little People of America at the downtown Holiday Inn. Their district director, Albert Boeckel, and his wife, who is also one of the little people, will arrive Saturday morning. They run the "Midget Grocery" in Dalton.

Roy Bridges, district secretary, said little people from all over the district — Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee — will be here, and probably several from other districts around the country. "We like to get together, and anybody that can make it usually goes to district meetings," he said. He expects some from as far away as New York.

"We can look eyeball to eyeball with each other instead of having to look up all the time at you tall people," he laughed.

The group started their meeting with a banquet Friday night

and a trip to the Braves' baseball game. Saturday they'll have business meetings and a luncheon, with more social activities.

Little People, who don't like the terms midget and dwarf, are generally under five feet tall, some of whom are small because of pituitary problems which cause them to stop growing very early, or achonroplastics, who may have bodies the size of "tall people's" but short legs and arms.

The organization tries to help little people adjust to their situation, and help the families of youngsters who will be little people understand and adjust to their children's smallness. Generally, unless they are crippled in some way, the little people have normal health and can do most anything taller people can do except reach things on top shelves.

"If employers give us a chance, we can do the job," Bridges said. He was with the Alien Property Commission in Washington for 25 years, until it was terminated after returning the property of Germans and Japanese held during the war years. Then he returned to Georgia about 6 months ago. He now runs the mail room for Southeastern Personnel Inc. here.

"When they interviewed me they said it would be a 'heavy job' and asked me if I could handle it. I told the man I might not could do it his way, but if I could do it my way I could," and things have gone fine ever since.

He uses small stools to make up for his height and has extensions on the pedals of his small foreign car.

"I was lucky. I grew up in a small town in South Carolina near Augusta and everybody knew me. Nobody ever pointed or yelled midget at me until after I was old enough to understand," he said. But he thinks most of the old cruelties are

things of the past.

Caught early, pituitary problems can be aided with human pituitary extract, which is very scarce. Researchers are attempting to synthesize it, which would be a major breakthrough.

Sometimes when two little people marry—and they often do—they have "little" children, but not always. Bridges said one little couple here has one son nearly six feet tall and another who is small like them.

One of the problems some little people have as children is that other children are always picking them up "like dolls" he said.

In addition to enjoying each other's company, the Little People are working on a nationwide scholarship fund to help young little people go to college, and planning their upcoming national convention in Hollywood, Calif. They have over 3,000 members nationally, and a sort of "children's auxiliary," Bridges said.

## A chapter for 'little people'

The Associated Press

**TURLOCK** — Susan Barnes fumed about her boss for demeaning her work because of her height, even though the 4-foot-6 Lodi woman stood only six inches shorter than him.

But Ken Williams noted he got his first job and stayed for 20 years because, at 4-foot-3, he could work in a nursery basement without banging his head on ceiling pipes.

Pride in their shortness recently drew them to the Turlock home of another dwarf who is trying to re-establish a chapter of Little People of America in the northern San Joaquin Valley.

The group offers a chance for "little people" to socialize, learn the medical consequences of dwarfism, get advice on clothing and even earn educational scholarships provided by the group.

At 3-foot-11, Kathy Duncan, 33, was the shortest of the dwarfs who met at her house. Her kitchen showed examples of the everyday barriers encountered by short people and their simple solutions, stools for one.

"Adaptation is part of our

life," said Sal Ibarra of Lodi.

They told each other how they have adjusted to stares, crass questions and rudeness from average-size people.

When Ibarra meets new people, they often ask how old he is, how tall he is and how much he weighs.

"I get, 'What's wrong with you?'" said Theresa Brazil, a 20-year-old psychology major at Modesto Junior College. "I've never had problems making friends once I get talking. I get through the whole thing of me being short very fast."

Ibarra agreed, saying, "We have to get beyond that, the questions, before we can have a relationship."

Several in the group said they take responsibility for making average-size people feel comfortable. Nevertheless, job-hunting can be a special chore.

Employers "look at you like you can't do it, so you have to come across as overconfident," Ibarra said. "It's a game and we've all got to play it, I guess."

"We're not handicapped. We're just short," Brazil said.



# The Little People Work

BY JOAN BECK

● IF THEY had lived in ancient Egypt, they would have been hailed as gods. In the Caesars' Rome, they would have been prized as counselors, jesters, or gladiators. During the Middle Ages, they would have lived with royalty. And during the Renaissance, they would have been the subject of renowned artists or treated as pets.

It's only in recent years that dwarfs and midgets have become understood for what they really are — men and women of normal intelligence who have abnormalities in growth which limit them markedly in height and cause innumerable problems in everyday life.

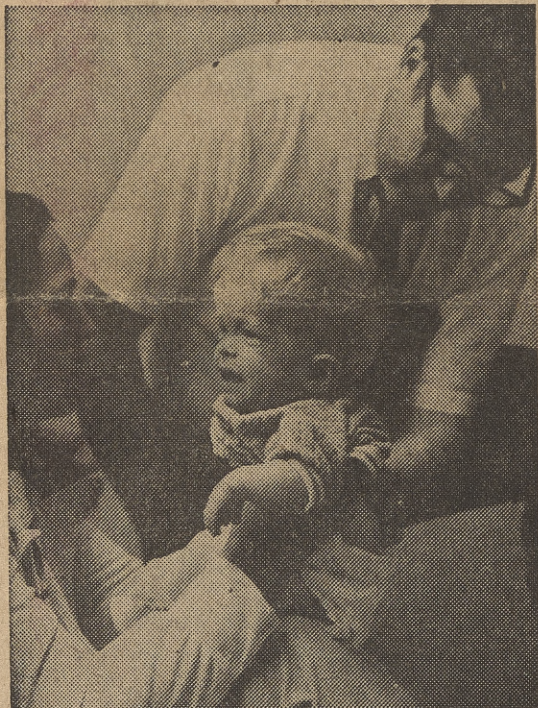
It's these common difficulties which have brought more than 400 midgets, dwarfs, and their families to a Hillside hotel for the 14th annual convention of Little People of America which ends Saturday. A national organization limited to those under 4'10" tall, LPA was started in 1957 by actor Billy Barty and now has more than 2,000 members.

Watching the Little People settle into the hotel for the 5-day meeting points up only a few of the staggering difficulties they encounter in a world that is out of proportion for them. A petite grandmother stands on a chair to dial a pay phone. Elevator buttons and door knobs have been lowered. A platform built at the front desk helps Little People talk at eye level to reservation clerks.

But chairs are still too high for Little People's feet to touch the floor. It's an effort to reach the water faucets in the rest rooms, to eat at normal-sized restaurant tables, even to climb a few average-sized steps.

What binds Little People together in an obvious warmth is the relief of finding others who understand the frustrations and share the problems of being Lilliputians in the world of Gullivers. For, other than their short stature, they are a diverse group.

LPA members at the convention range in age from 2 to almost 80, with large contingents of children and teens, called "Little Littles." There are accountants, artists, actors, teachers, secretaries, students, writers, engineers, bankers, homemakers and a wide range of other achieving adults.



At LPA meetings, members talk about how to get clothes that fit, how to manage driving a car, what kinds of special equipment help, what they should tell their children about short stature. They also have an unusual opportunity to learn more about their particular medical problems and the genetic reasons for them.

The Little People organization has developed a close working relationship with specialists in various aspects of short stature at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Eight of these physicians, headed by Dr. Victor McKusick, are attending the LPA convention, both to study the Little People and to offer them a variety of medical help and genetic information — not only at the meeting but at the Baltimore medical center.

"There are at least a dozen types of short stature represented among the Little People," Dr. McKusick told a convention audience. The most common form is achondroplasia, an inherited disorder which involves not only short stature but a disproportioned body.

An individual with achondroplasia — commonly called a dwarf — typically has a head that is somewhat larger than usual, with a wide forehead, button-shaped nose and a lower jaw that juts forward slightly.

A dwarf's trunk is normal in size, but his spinal column may be unusually narrow and curvatures are common. He may have lordosis in the lower part of his back, giving

him a characteristic posture. Some dwarfs need treatment with braces and even surgery for these difficulties.

The legs of a dwarf are extremely short and stumpy-looking. Bowing is common and may increase as he reaches the teen-age and adult years. His feet are near-normal in size, but may have some degree of clubfoot.

What goes wrong with normal patterns of growth to produce achondroplasia? The condition is inherited and is caused by a single, defective, dominant gene. This means that if one parent is an achondroplastic dwarf and the other is of normal size, each of their children will have one chance in two of inheriting achondroplasia.

If two individuals with achondroplasia marry, chances are three out of four that each child will inherit at least one abnormal gene and have this form of dwarfism. There's only one chance in four that each youngster will be of normal size.

Many of the families at the Little People convention — a few of them including three generations of dwarfs — show these inheritance patterns quite clearly. But in other instances, an achondroplastic dwarf is born to parents who are of normal size. A new, unexplained mutation in a gene which influences growth accounts for these instances, researchers now assume.

A youngster who has achondroplasia as a result of a new mutation in a gene can pass the disorder on to his children and his descendants in the usual inheritance patterns. But his parents almost certainly will not have another dwarf child — unlike parents who are dwarfs themselves.

Several other forms of dwarfism are often misdiagnosed as achondroplasia. It's important that an accurate diagnosis be made,

Dr. Judy Hall and Dr. Arthur Siebens, of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, give a medical checkup to Jack Bedow, of Owatonna, Minn., at L. P. A. convention.



# on a Big Problem



Little People of America — dwarfs, midgets, and their families — listen to a speaker at the organization's 14th annual convention in Hillside.

Tribune photos by Michael Budrys

President Joe Alexander, like most L. P. A. speakers, needs a special platform to reach the podium.

because some of the other disorders mimicking achondroplasia have different kinds of inheritance patterns — and require a different kind of medical treatment.

This kind of diagnostic help and genetic counseling is offered to Little People by the Johns Hopkins researchers.

Not all of the Little People have disproportionate bodies. Many are normally proportioned, but simply unusually small in size. They are commonly called midgets, or pituitary dwarfs, and usually have a condition called hypopituitarism.

Hypopituitarism is caused by a lack of normal functioning of the pituitary gland, a small organ located at the base of the brain in the center of the head, which secretes human growth hormone and other essential substances. But this broad classification includes several different medical conditions, with different inheritance patterns and different treatment needs.

Some midgets do not mature sexually, because their pituitary gland does not produce the necessary hormones. They continue to look unusually young even when they are in their 20's and 30's and are not able to have children.



Other midgets do mature sexually and can have children. If two midgets of this type marry, their offspring will all be midgets. Because the disorder is caused by the presence of two abnormal, defective genes, affected individuals can only pass along defective genes to their youngsters. When a midget marries a person of normal size who is not a carrier of the same disorder, all of their children will be carriers but will not be midgets.

In recent years, researchers have had considerable success treating midgets who have hypopituitarism with human growth hormone.

Regardless of the genetic odds, many of the Little People have married — often to each other. Many have children — some of them normal in size, others with the same genetic disorder as one or both of their parents.

But some of the couples prefer to adopt children — either instead of having their own, or in addition. LPA has an active adoption bureau headed by Mrs. Eleanor Jones, who is notified whenever a dwarf or midget child is available for adoption anywhere in the United States.

DALLAS NEWS Fri Feb. 9, 1973

For the weekend

## LPA prepares for convention

The little people are making big plans for Saturday and Sunday at the Hilton Inn.

That's the Little People of America (LPA), none more than 4 feet, 10 inches tall, whose members in Texas and Louisiana will send about 50 of their number to a district convention here.

In charge of arrangements are officers of the host group, the Dallas-Fort Worth Area Chapter: Garry Smith, president; Danny Blain, vice-president; Ms. Mary Beth Eley, secretary, and Ms. Elaine Sandlin, treasurer.

The officers, sometimes with the addition of Mrs. Smith, make up a combined instrumental-vocal group which has given public performances at the Mesquite Championship Rodeo and elsewhere.

This group will provide music for dancing starting at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, immediately after a contest in which Ms. Eley's successor as "Miss Mini" will be selected. Single girls who are LPA members and at least 15 years old are eligible.

Convention participants will register on Saturday morning, attend a 1 p.m. business session and tour the

Museum on the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike in Grand Prairie at 2:30 p.m.

Two events are scheduled for 4:30 p.m.: a closed meeting of the LPA Parents Auxiliary and a party exclusively for "little littles"—children of the little people.

Also on the agenda are the making of a group photograph at 5:30 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m., to be followed by the Miss Mini contest and dancing or free time.

The convention will adjourn after an 8 a.m. breakfast Sunday and a devotional program at 9:30 a.m.

## Peppermint is daily taste

CHICAGO

It may not be among your favorite flavors, but there is a good chance you are getting a daily taste of peppermint.

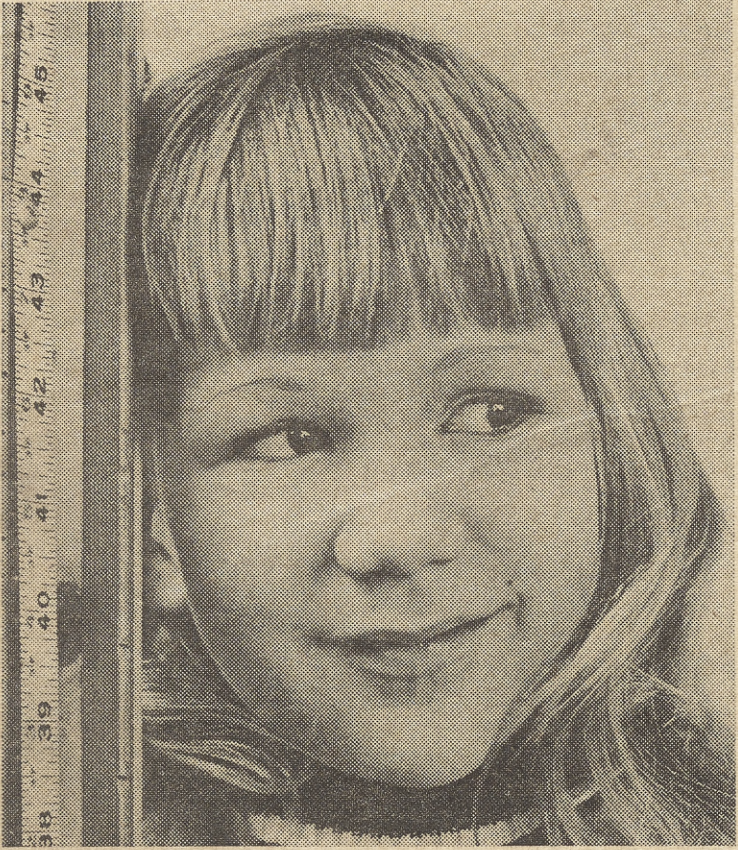
Besides peppermint sticks, peppermint oil is widely used for flavoring mouthwashes, toothpastes, cough drops, chewing gum and for masking the unpleasant taste and odor of numerous medicinal products.—(UPI)



# Girl Is Saved From Being a Dwarf by Hormone Injections

By LLOYD MALLAN

When Susan Stinnett started kindergarten at the age of 5 she was as tiny as a little girl of 2. She was so delicate that her classmates cradled her in their arms and carried her around like a precious doll to keep her from being stepped on.



**SHE'S GROWN:** Susan stands near a tape measure to show she's over 46 inches tall — average for her age.

"She was more like a mascot than a playmate," her mother, Mrs. John Stinnett, told The ENQUIRER in the family's Fort Wayne, Ind., home. The Stinnetts have five other children ranging in age from 12 to 24, and all of them are normal.

Mrs. Stinnett said that Susan appeared to be healthy and normal in every way when she was born on April 19, 1963.

"She weighed over 6 lbs. She grew at a fairly normal rate until she was about 2 years old.

"Then she just stopped growing.

"At 5 years old, she was still wearing the clothes we bought her when she was 2. Doctors in Fort Wayne doubted that anything could ever be done to help Susan. They said she was probably destined to be a dwarf.

"We were panic-stricken to think that all her life Susan would never get any bigger," Mrs. Stinnett said.

"But finally one doctor suggested that Susan be taken to a clinic near Fort Wayne."

The clinic specialists referred the family to Washington University's Research Center in St. Louis. The Research Center had been working for several years on ways to stimulate growth in dwarfed children, Mrs. Stinnett said.

"They diagnosed Susan's case as 'hypopituitary dwarfism.' They explained that this meant her pituitary gland — which controls human growth — was either seriously malfunctioning or not functioning at all. They also said it was a type of dwarfism which might be cured by hormones extracted from human pituitary glands.

"But there was a great shortage of the hormones because the glands were only available from dead people who had willed them to science before they died."

An appeal was made to the National Pituitary Agency at Baltimore, Md., the single facility in America that extracts, processes and stores hormones from human pituitary glands, said Mrs. Stinnett.

The agency said the glands would have to be collected in Fort Wayne and sent to Baltimore for processing.

Fort Wayne's three general hospitals went all-out in an effort to have dying patients will their pituitary glands to Susan.

Today, thanks to the donated glands, Susan,



**NORMAL SIZE:** 7-year-old Susan Stinnett (in the light-colored pants suit) is no longer the smallest child in her second-grade class.

who will be 8 on April 19, is already about average in size.

"Her schoolmates in the second grade can no longer lift and carry her about.

"She's over 46 inches tall and weighs about 50 lbs.

"In the first two years alone, after taking the hormone injections, Susan grew more than 12 inches," her mother said.

"It's such a relief to know that Susan will not be a tiny dwarf all her life. But if it hadn't been for luck in finding the right place to take her, she might still be wearing the dresses of a 2-year-old."

Mr. and Mrs. Stinnett both told The ENQUIRER that they and their adult children have willed their pituitary glands after death to science, "so that some child we don't even know can start a new life and be as healthy and happy as our Susan is now."

Mrs. Stinnett said: "There are more than a half-million youngsters in the United States suffering from severe growth deficiencies."

Because of this, she and her husband have joined a volunteer organization called "Human Growth, Inc." It is located at 307 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. It advises doctors and parents about treatment of stunted children.

It also offers financial aid for treatment of growth problems in children.

42 A The Dallas Morning News  
Sunday, February 11, 1973

## Little People Meeting

### Cuban Native Wins 'Mini-Queen' Title

BY MITCH LOBROVICH

With a big smile lighting up her 4-foot frame, Miss Cecilia Divino, 23, joyfully accepted the Miss Mini Queen crown of the District 8 Chapter of the Little People of America (LPA) Saturday night at the Hilton Inn.

Only minutes before the Cuban native had tearfully replied to a question regarding her immigration here that she was glad to find "I wasn't the only little person around."

"The purpose of the organization is to help little people get out and meet the public and to have interaction with each other," said George well, past district director of the LPA.

"Years ago a dwarf was afraid to be seen on the street for all the staring."

Cornwell said little people prefer the name dwarf to midget because a midget is only one of 85 different type of dwarf.

THE LPA, which was founded in 1957 by show business dwarf Billy Barty, now lists 2000 paying members nationwide.

"Many people think the only things dwarfs do is go into show business—but only 6 per cent of our members are employed as such."

"I've been an electrical contractor myself for the past 30 years," Cornwell said.

AROUND 60 little people attended the convention from the 2-state district of Texas and Louisiana. The district here lists 200 members.

"We know of at least 100 more dwarfs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and surrounding counties that we are unable to get in touch with. Parents are often ashamed and try to keep them out of sight."

"We try to get to these dwarfs so they can start mixing with people."

As one pretty little contestant who has been living on her own revealed, "When little people get on their own they can come to realize that their problems are no larger than other people's—and that the only space we need to fill is the space between our ears."

son, second  
raiser for t  
urday. See





August 21, 1902

August 31, 1967

Mrs. Harry Sears  
3541 Dimond Avenue  
Oakland, California 94602

Dear Mrs. Sears:

We received your generous gift in the mail yesterday. On behalf of LPA and its members, I should like to express our appreciation for your thoughtfulness. Please be assured that the autographed picture of Tom Thumb and his wife will be properly included in our archives for the benefit of all future little people.

With kindest regards,

Lee Kitchens  
President

## Tom Thumb Visits the White House

Tom Thumb, who made his first public appearance in 1842, became the world's best-known Lilliputian through the press-agentry and showmanship of Phineas T. Barnum who is still regarded by many as the greatest showman of all time. When Tom met the public for the first time, he weighed only sixteen pounds and was not more than two feet tall.

This little man was the center of one of the most unusual social functions ever held in the White House—a reception given on February 13, 1863, by President and Mrs. Lincoln three days after Tom Thumb had married Lavina Warren, a twenty-year-old woman of about his own height.

Following the diminutive couple's wedding, spectacular receptions were held for the newlyweds in Baltimore and Philadelphia. And, according to authoress Elizabeth Keckley, Mrs. Lincoln was influenced by some of her friends to give a reception for Mr. and Mrs. Thumb. The President's wife was convinced that it was "her duty" as the First Lady to show some attention to the remarkable dwarfs. So the reception was arranged, with a limited number of friends to be in attendance.

The midget couple, upon entering the White House, was announced in dignified, loud tones and the bridegroom, taking the arm of his bride, who wore

a wedding dress of white satin, advanced proudly, almost to Mr. Lincoln's feet.

It was necessary for the tall host to bend and stoop in order to shake the hands of Tom and his bride; yet, through his attitude and his conversation, Mr. Lincoln made his unusual guests feel that he regarded them as important, sensible people who were widely traveled and knew something of the world.



Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb, as they attended a White House reception in their honor in 1863.



# Nothing unnatural about 'little people'

By MARY BRINKERHOFF

There's nothing unnatural about the "little people"—nothing supernatural, either, unless you're counting leprechauns.

If instead you're counting brave, resourceful men and women 4 feet, 10 inches tall or less, you will find half a hundred or so gathered here at the Hilton Inn Feb. 10. They're coming from all over Texas and Louisiana for the District 8 convention of the nationwide organization, Little People of America (LPA).

The convention alone would be enough to make Feb. 10 a memorable day for Garry and Melinda Smith, the president and first lady of the host group, the Dallas-Fort Worth area chapter. They have an even better reason, though.

Feb. 10 will be the 3-month birthday of their "little" little, Shelley.

IT NEED hardly be explained that a little little is a child destined to grow into a little adult—possibly a child with parents of normal size, like all four of Shelley's grandparents.

Members of the LPA are perhaps more concerned about their children's future than ordinary mothers and fathers.

The national organization finances vocational grants through a foundation; a national employment committee is busy listing jobs best suited for little people.

(Accounting and bookkeeping, assembly work, filing, secretarial work, sales, store management, supervision of children, teaching and typing head a preliminary list.)

The district convention agenda includes a Saturday afternoon meeting of the LPA parents' auxiliary, along with such other events as a Miss Mini contest (for single girls 15 and older) and a closing breakfast Feb. 11.

In the Smiths' pleasant home at 323 Cresthill, Mesquite, where everything from poodle to piano is built to what the rest of us consider normal scale, Garry and Melinda, both articulate, discuss their daughter's future.

THEY HAVE no quarrel with little people who choose to be clowns or wrestlers or who pursue other callings dictated by their unusual dimensions. If that's their thing, the Smiths feel, let them do it—but don't file all others of the same size under identical labels.

"We're just an everyday family," says Garry, a Western Electric Co. machine operator. He adds that in the area chapter he heads, "we've got everything from electronics workers to dishwashers."

Melinda, who stands about as tall as her husband—3 feet, 11 inches—and works as a secretary for Resalab, explains that what little people want most is to be accepted as job holders. "It was important for Garry and me; it's more important now for Shelley."

She remembers having been interviewed once for a job by telephone. Her qualifications sounded great to the person on the other end of the line—until the talk got around to a required physical examination.

Melinda then mentioned that she's an achondroplastic dwarf, one with an average-size body but short arms and legs. The job interview ended at once.

LITTLE PEOPLE'S big problem, illustrated by this incident, is getting a chance to prove their ability.

Melinda, who comes from Floydada in the Panhandle and holds a degree from Texas Tech, believes the LPA will make life easier for Shelley. She herself never knew another little person until she met Garry, a Nacogdoches boy and a Kilgore College graduate, during a national LPA convention.

Their offspring is something of a medical wonder—the first recorded

child, her parents have been told, with one achondroplastic parent and one of Garry's type, shorter of body and longer of limb.

Shelley, who weighed 6 pounds, 13 ounces at birth and already seems to share her parents' love of music, could have been physically normal; instead, she inherits her mother's variety of dwarfism.

She can expect to face her problem, as her grandparents made her parents do; to live some day in the small-scaled house Garry and Melinda hope to build; eventually to drive her own car as they do, perhaps with extensions on the foot controls.

Some day, maybe, she can expect a breakthrough in medical understanding of dwarfism. Meanwhile, she can listen to her mother quoting LPA founder Billy Barty: "The only space we have to conquer is between our ears."

## Trend

The Dallas Morning News

Section C

Friday, February 2, 1973



—Dallas News: Jack Beers

"Little people" Garry and Melinda Smith with their "little, little," Shelley . . . They're "just an everyday family," conquering today's prejudices.

Page E8

THE SACRAMENTO BEE  
Thursday, May 3, 1973

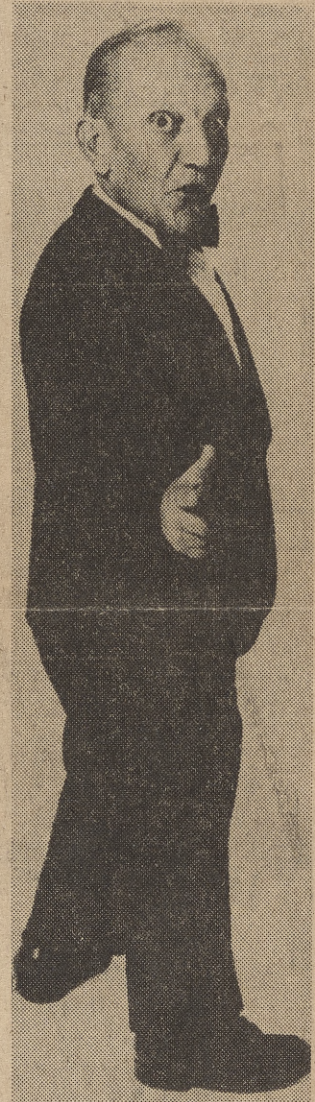
## UCD Multitheater Show Will Include Tiny Star

A number of professional, nonstudent performers are announced for a joint stage presentation of the drama, art and music departments at University at California, Davis. The multitheater show is entitled "Out Our Way: A Kultural Extravaganza With Music."

Heading the performance lineup is Billy Barty, one of the more famous "little persons" of the world. The three-foot, nine-inch Barty has been in 120 films and a number of television series. He is being flown in from Los Angeles for the show, set for Wednesday through May 13 at 8:15 PM in the campus Main Theater. Barty is a singer, dancer, drummer, impersonator and comic. He will work with the students.

Other performers: Bodie Chicken, billed as a "200-pound fowl who sings protest songs against 'finger lickies' while wailing an old blues song"; David Wright, who tap dances on roller skates while twirling a baton and who was on the Ted Mack show for 10 weeks; the "Chicago Bombshell," Lana, a lead dancer with a senior citizens group, the Senior Swingers, who also will be on hand; Little Roger and the Goose Bumps in original music; "a 70-year-old 'Tiny Tim'"; a black dance company, The Creators; Jay Gottlieb, who has appeared on the Mike Douglas TV show, who will play his prized saw, given to him by Sophie Tucker before she

died; an electronic orchestra, The Touch a Sutra, with a Moog synthesizer; and Harold Webb and his



Billy Barty

black theater group. Also there will be flambe dinners prepared during the performance, and a 50-foot long, nine-foot high aluminum, movable train track sculpture by Jerry Johnston "with 10,000 bricks," according to UCD, which has tickets for the show. William T. Wiley and Dan Snyder are the directors.

Thought you'd enjoy seeing this picture, since you know Billy Barty



## Problems of Dwarfs Gain Attention As They Fight Job Bias, Ostracism

### Fending for Themselves

Most members have adapted remarkably well to the physical frustrations of their size. Many, afraid of being thought helpless or "crippled," exhibit a plucky independence. Mrs. Stickney who is four-feet-two-inches tall, says she sometimes climbs right into the frozen-food compartments at grocery stores to reach the orange juice. And Lee Kitchens, now a successful engineer with Texas Instruments Inc., carries a collapsible accelerator pedal extension in his briefcase that he fits on the rented cars he drives on business trips. A similar device enables him to pilot his own plane.

In an effort to make their physical environment more convenient, The Little People of America has recently joined forces with other organizations, such as the California Association of the Physically Handicapped. This group has successfully lobbied for state laws requiring lower pay phones, curbside ramps and railings in public toilets—all to benefit people confined to wheelchairs. Richard Wooten, president of the association, told the Little People's convention that dwarfs and people in wheelchairs "share a common problem—the height of things."

The handicap of short stature gives employers a good excuse to refuse to hire dwarfs. "It's all too easy for a potential employer to look at a four-foot-two adult and say, 'Oh my gosh, that person can't handle a job,'" Mrs. Stickney complains. School superintendents in Milwaukee doubted that she could discipline a class. "They wouldn't touch me with a 10-foot pole," she recalls. "They weren't sure how their public would react."

Another dwarf with a Ph.D. in chemistry was turned down for a research job by several major drug firms on the ground that he wouldn't be able to reach the laboratory instruments. His would-be employers ignored the fact that he had managed well enough in the laboratory to get his doctorate.

### Plumbers and "Little Oscars"

Of course, some dwarfs take advantage of their size and work as entertainers. Mr. Barty, for example, has appeared in 120 movies. Others become sales promotional representatives for firms like Oscar Mayer & Co., a Madison, Wis., meat packer that uses five midgets as "Little Oscars."

Some little people even hold physically demanding jobs. Rick LaRussa, a plumber, says customers are shocked when he appears at their door. "They tell me, 'I called a plumber, not a two-foot-two midget,'" he says. (The 26-year-old San Franciscan is actually four-feet-three.) With the aid of a stepladder, he says, "I can do anything a normal-sized plumber can,

Please Turn to Page 10, Column 1

### Continued From First Page

except lift a heavy pipe or a 200-pound bathtub."

Employers are often less concerned by the physical strain of the work than they are about the reactions of co-workers. "Social acceptance is the greatest problem for a little person in getting a job," says Ron Kaminiski, the head of the San Francisco office of California's Department of Rehabilitation.

Social difficulties often begin early in life, when parents become aware of their child's birth defect. "Parents go through a period of mourning at first for the loss of their perfect child," says Joan Weiss, a social worker for the Moore Clinic at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, the nation's leading dwarfism research center.

Once they've accepted their child's dwarfism, some parents become overly protective. Mr. Kitchens reacted to such treatment by developing a strong streak of independence. "My parents wouldn't let me drive a car in high school," he says, "so I went to college, earned enough money to buy my own car and taught myself to drive with pedal attachments."

Many dwarf children quickly learn how to cope with being taunted and "babied" by their schoolmates. One dwarf in the fifth grade who was persistently teased finally replied, "Don't you know? My mother puts me in the dryer every night." And when a fourth-grader grew weary of being carried around the playground "like a big living doll," her mother says, she began kicking anyone who tried.

### Agonizing Rejections

Few children are prepared for what many little people say is the worst crisis: dating and finding a mate. "They probably go through five times the agony all teens go through," observes Miss Weiss. In John Strudwick's case, one girl who turned down his prom invitation told him, "Well, why don't you run around with your own kind?" He says now: "That wasn't easy, since I was the only dwarf at my school." Another girl told him, "Little People of America ought to set up a segregated community of Lilliputian-sized people." Mr. Strudwick, who

stands four-feet-four-inches tall, weathered these hurts and went on to win election as student body president of Wesley Junior College in Dover, Del., last spring. He wants to go into politics some day "after all the old wives' tales about dwarfs are done away with."

Mindful of its members' dating problems, Little People of America provides a busy social schedule so that dwarfs can meet members of the opposite sex who are their own size. "It was nice to go to a national convention, ask a girl to dance and not have to look up at her for a change," Mr. LaRussa says. Overnight romances bloom during the convention. ("Did you hear about the saxophone player?" gushes one dwarf woman to another. "He got engaged on the boat trip this week.") Mr. Barty guesses that 75% of the married couples in LPA met through the organization.

Eventually, medical science may see to it that fewer dwarfs face such adjustment problems. Some dwarf children can already be cured, and the prospect is good that many more will achieve average height in years to come.

Since 1965, the Moore Clinic has treated some 1,500 dwarfs for special medical problems such as premature arthritis and bow-leggedness. Clinic doctors try to isolate the cause of each patient's handicap from the more than 70 possible causes of dwarfism. These range from hormonal failure and defective genes to bone diseases and inadequate nutrition. An accurate diagnosis is important in family planning, as it can determine whether the condition will be passed on to a dwarf's children. (Not all types of dwarfism are inherited.) And, if made early enough, the diagnosis can sometimes lead to a cure.

### The Human Growth Hormone

Over the past 10 years, some 2,000 midget children have been able to grow as tall as five-feet-four after being injected with Human Growth Hormone, or HGH, which is secreted by the pituitary, a pea-sized gland located beneath the base of the brain. These midgets, whose short stature is caused by an underactive pituitary, receive HGH extracted from ca-





**SIZING THE SITUATION** — Little People of America, Inc. are holding their District 8 annual spring meeting at the Riverside Motor Hotel. Here a group of members of the association gather at poolside to enjoy a visit. From left to right they are Mike

Jones, of Ardmore, Okla., James Owens of Cleburne, Tim Deatherage of Wichita Falls and Danny Blain of Fort Worth. (Bulletin Photo)

## TO LITTLE PEOPLE

# 'Handicap' a no-no

Handicap is a no-no word to members of the Little People of America, Inc.

"We only refer to our problems as nuisances," Lee Kitchens, past national president of the LPA, said Saturday at the three-day annual spring meeting of District 8 being held at the Riverside Motor Hotel in Brownwood.

Some 50 men, women and children are attending the meeting and come from such places as Cleburne, Wichita Falls, Fort Worth, Comanche, Brownwood, Austin, Richardson, and cities in Oklahoma and Louisiana. Sandy King of Brownwood is serving as host.

### Informal Note

Informality is the magic word

at the meeting. Members of District 8 LPAs gather in little groups at the hotel and discuss such items as clothing, job opportunities, how to raise their children and any other topic in which they are interested.

Along with the informal gatherings, a fish fry at Lake Brownwood was held Saturday night and Sunday's program includes a tour of the city and the Douglas MacArthur Academy of Freedom.

According to Kitchens, purposes of the LPA organization are many. "We learn to live with ourselves," he said. He pointed out sometimes normal-size parents have a child of small stature. "By listening to other 'Little People' and looking around to see what they have done with their lives, they are reassured life can be as rewarding for their children as for any child of normal size," he said.

Kitchens said most of the members of the organization are gainfully employed. At the meeting this weekend professions represented include barbers, electricians, draftsmen, teachers, restaurant managers, secretaries, and

engineers.

### Meet Prejudice

"Once in a while our heights get in the way and we run into prejudice," Kitchens said. "The Equal Opportunity Act legally eliminates prejudices but you can't legislate peoples' minds," he said.

He said there are 85 different types of short stature people. Some take their shortness from

See NO-NO on page 2-A

## Problems of Dwarfs In an Oversized World Gain More Attention

\* \* \*

'Little People of America' Fight  
Job Bias, Social Ostracism,  
Out-of-Reach Public Facilities

By JOANN S. LUEBLIN

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

OAKLAND, Calif. — John Strudwick, Lee Kitchens and Harriet Stickney have spent their lives adjusting to a world that is the wrong size.

They are dwarfs, and for them and all other people of abnormally small stature, the simplest of daily tasks can be infuriatingly difficult. Out-of-reach elevator buttons, public telephones and closet racks present frustrating obstacles unknown to average-sized adults.

Far worse, however, is the struggle against parental overprotection, social ostracism and job discrimination that is painfully familiar to nearly everyone who shares this handicap. Until Mr. Kitchens was 16, for example, his mother insisted on helping him cross the street. Mr. Strudwick was turned down by 14 girls before he got a date for his high school senior prom. And although she had a master's degree and eight years' teaching experience in her hometown of Sheboygan, Wis., Mrs. Stickney couldn't find a job when she moved to suburban Milwaukee.

### Power to the Little People

Today, however, most of the painful times are behind them. Like many of the nation's estimated 100,000 dwarfs, they are showing new determination to overturn long-standing barriers of discrimination and ignorance and to win broader acceptance in society. Especially vocal in demanding increased recognition for the unique problems of dwarfs is a national organization called Little People of America Inc. Movie actor Billy Barty, a dwarf, founded the group in 1957 to educate the public and help dwarfs overcome their social, medical and physical problems.

While dwarfs organize for mutual support and self-help, medical researchers are taking a renewed interest in treating and preventing dwarfism. The promise of normal growth can still be offered to only a few, but scientists believe they are on the threshold of dramatic gains.

There are two major types of dwarfism, arbitrarily defined as adult height of under four feet 10 inches. Disproportionate dwarfs have short limbs, but their heads and trunks are normal. Proportionate dwarfs, commonly called midgets, look like average-sized people in miniature. In nearly all cases, dwarfism affects only physical appearances, not intelligence.

At the Little People's 15th national convention here this summer, 300 of the group's 2,068 members consulted with medical geneticists and talked about how to survive as "little people," as they call themselves.

APRIL 4, 1975

## Focus On Folks

C. C. Perryman has received word that his daughter Mary and husband Lee Kitchens are moving to Rieti, Italy, early this month, accompanied by their daughter who has been with them in Holland since September. Their son is completing high school in Richardson, Texas. Lee is with Texas Instruments on special assignment.



July 1973

# The Little People's Holiday

*A photographic visit to a small convention*



"I'm not an elf, I'm a short-statured man, and I don't belong in the circus," proclaims fifteen-year-old Larry Morse of Flint, Michigan, who stands thirty-seven and a half inches tall. Larry is a member of Little People of America, a national organization for anyone under four feet, ten inches. Little People of America is concerned with the practical, psychological, economic, medical, and social problems of smallness. Each year it holds a convention and this year's was at the otherwise bland Hilton in Oakland. "We celebrate being ourselves," explains Nick Della Valle, who works in public relations in Chicago. L.P.A.'s convention is like all others—there are symposia, dances, sporting events, mixers. Says Gracie Oliver, seventeen: "I plan to experience all I can in life." Says David Norris, nineteen: "The small world helps me face the tall world." And, according to three-foot, nine-inch actor Billy Barty, who started the L.P.A. in 1957: "Kids today have a better shot. Little People of America advises, 'Live in *both* worlds. Accept yourself and you can accept anything.' "





**T**he softball game: This year, the West team, shown here, defeated the East. One participant was André Boursse, a social-science student from Hayward, California. Boursse, an articulate spokesman, says, "My





philosophy is that you can do anything you want. I play golf. I could be a ballplayer in a league for little people. Society doesn't adapt for differentness, yet most people are different in some way. The norm is a myth."





Couples: Laurel Goodkin and Larry Green, top, and Annis Arthur and Gary Friedkin, bottom, were introduced at L.P.A. conventions. Harriet Stickney, vice-president of the organization, says that "most dwarfs have average-sized parents who come to realize that their children are happiest dating and marrying another dwarf." Little People of America offers its members marriage counseling and a child adoption service.





**T**he fashion show: One event at the convention was a program which featured clothing made by and for little people. "The purpose," reports Annis Arthur, top, "is to tell little people they can sew. Older ladies often settle for things bought in a children's shop. Well, we can be stylish and have clothes fit us." The photograph on the bottom was also taken at the show—and features examples of attire for a small wedding.





**P**ortrait of family and friends: Oakland was the first convention for Larry (plaid jacket) and Kent and Kim Page (jacketless), teen-age twins from Tucson. "I haven't had so much fun since I was born," remarks Larry. "It's the one time I can be just me," adds Nick Della Valle (back row, center). And, says Adele Chamborden (left), a perennial convention favorite, "Always think big. You are as God wants you to be."



## Dwarfs Hold a Convention

1973

# Little People Gather

In the lobby of the Hilton Inn at the Oakland Airport yesterday a white telephone sat on a stand two feet high with a sign that said, "Little People's House Phone."

Against the wall by the elevator stood a stick — to be used to push the button.

In the bathroom of many rooms there was as tool to reach the wash basin, and the towels were draped over special low racks.

For the Little People of America, Inc., was holding its 15th annual convention, with about 300 delegate dwarfs headed by Joe Alexander of Goldendale, Wash.

### DWARFS

"We're dwarfs, not midgets," said Billy Barty of Hollywood, the movie and television actor who founded LPA in 1957. "Midgets are circus freaks."

(Technically, midgets are dwarfs who are perfectly proportioned. There are 55 types of dwarfism, which is a physical characteristic unrelated to mental ability.)

Barty, a stocky 3 feet 9½ inches, has appeared in 120 films — 75 of them during the '30s, as Mickey Rooney's brother.

### VIEW

He sees a change in the attitude of big people toward dwarfs in the past few years — largely, he feels through media coverage of LPA conventions around the country.



Photos by Jerry Telfer

ANNIS ARTHUR (LEFT) TALKED TO LES KRIMS  
He's a photographer working on a book about the little people

"But we've still got a long way to go," he said. "Parents unwittingly — maybe wittingly sometimes — instill this freakish attitude in children. There's even a popular children's book with the definition: 'Dwarf — a mean, nasty little man seen

in fairy tales.'

"I was in Reno a while back and a woman threatened her child: 'Stop that crying or I'll have that little man bite you.'"

"I went up to the little girl and said, 'Honey, it's not me you have to worry about —

it's her.'"

What was his most aggravating problem as a dwarf?

Barty replied straight-faced: "Not getting a dramatic lead opposite Elizabeth Taylor."

A more common cause for annoyance is such architectural details as light switches or door knobs — inches beyond fingertips, reachable only if the dwarf stands on tiptoe.

"I was at Kennedy Airport and ran all over the place and couldn't find a phone in a single booth I could reach," he said. "I had to ask a big person to put my dime in and dial for me."

### HOPE

Dr. Victor McKusick, head of the department of medicine at Johns Hopkins University, was the speaker at yesterday's luncheon.

He said the best hope at present for a remedy for a prevalent type of dwarfism — that caused by a deficiency in growth hormones — lies in the work of Dr. C. H. Li, University of California Medical Center biochemist, who synthesized the hormone in 1971.

Its eventual manufacture will make the hormone available to children afflicted with dwarfism.

"A little person can happen to anyone," Barty reminded newsmen. "Little people come from big people."



ADELE (TWINKLES) CHAMBORDON  
A platform to reach the telephone

## ADVICE FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

July 1, 1973

# How to Cope With Life in a Big World

By JOHN MILLER  
Tribune Staff Writer

Some sound advice on how to cope with being a small person in a big world was given during a symposium at the 15th annual Little People of America convention here yesterday.

Participants in the panel discussion at the Oakland Hilton Inn included both parents and children afflicted with dwarfism, normal size parents of dwarf children, a normal 15-year-old girl whose kid sister is a dwarf and a pediatrician who specializes in dwarfism.

The panelists discussed a wide variety of problems and experiences with dwarfism and each member enthusiastically endorsed the work of the Little People of America (LPA), which was formed in 1957 to provide fellowship, an interchange in ideas and solutions to the many problems unique to persons of short stature.

"If it hadn't been for the LPA, my children would not have been able to live in the world as it is," said Mrs.

Launa Turner of Swannanoa, N. C., a dwarf who is both a mother and a grandmother.

Mrs. Turner, a personnel officer for a sanatorium, said there is no reason why people suffering from dwarfism should drop out of society.

"The world is made up of both big and little people and we just have to make our way," Mrs. Turner, a founding member of LPA, declared.

Kathy Carrington, a normal size teenager, said she and her dwarf sister, Debbie, 13, are "two years and two feet apart" but that Debbie's stature has neither embarrassed her or been a cause of any special problems.

"I never really stopped to think about her being two feet shorter than me—only that she's my sister," Kathy said. "Size doesn't make any difference in a person's worth."

Kathy's friends have accepted Debbie totally. "In fact," Kathy told the symposium, "Debbie gets more attention than I do from my friends."

Mrs. Wendy Ricker, co-chairman of the LPA parent

auxiliary, described her feelings upon learning that a daughter was a dwarf.

"It was a terrible shock at first and it took a long time for us to move beyond the stage of asking 'why' and feeling sorry for ourselves and our child. Finally, after joining LPA and getting together with others in similar circumstances, we found that sharing was a great help to us and our child."

She said one of the hardest things to learn as a parent of a dwarf child is to treat the child according to age and not size. "It's darned hard to do and we're still struggling, but it's the only way," she said.

Dr. Charles Scott, Jr., LPA medical consultant from the University of Texas Medical School, told those attending the symposium that early diagnosis is necessary to determine the specific type of dwarfism involved, to provide genetic counseling for normal parents contemplating other children and to determine if special medical treatment is required immediately.

Dr. Scott said when he went to medical school there was no special study in short stature problems, but there has been some improvement during the past decade.

"There is an increasing amount of information being made available to physicians, although not near enough, and we hope to have much more in the future," he said.

Although there are more than 2,000 members of LPA, estimates are that the number of mature American adults under five feet tall and technically classified as dwarfs may reach a half-million, according to the Human Growth Foundation, a group which acts as a clearing house for moral support and medical aid to families with children who have growth problems. Headquarters for the group is in Baltimore, Md.

About 300 delegates from all over the country are attending the convention which ends today. National headquarters for LPA is in Owatonna, Minn.



**Texas**  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE  
**Sunday** MAGAZINE  
MAY 26, 1974

**The  
little  
people**





# THE LITTLE PI



*Donald Calhoun, 7, right, swings with his brother Charles, 19 months, a dwarf.*



# PEOPLE



*Dwarfs Selma and Harry Burman with their daughter Helen, who is average size.*



*Jeff Hull with his wife, Gail, a dwarf, and their children Denise, 3, in foreground, and Dawn, 14 months, a dwarf.*

Continued





Gail Hull, above left, didn't know the bone disease that stunted her growth is hereditary. She was shocked to bear a dwarf, Dawn, 16 months, in foreground. Jeff Hull and another daughter Denise, 2, are also shown. Charles Calhoun, 19 months, at left, has average size parents. Above is Colleen Horndt. She says she understands why some persons stare at her because she also stares at people who look different.



#### Continued

never dated a dwarf. "I used to think any man under 5 feet was too short."

Little people don't live in doll houses with small furniture. Their homes aren't modified partly because they would be hard to sell. In Colleen Horndt's mobile home, the mailbox is lower and the lamps are on the floor. There are several stools in the house.

Some little people drive big cars. Grady Horndt, a welder, drives a Dodge Polara with extension controls on the dashboard. Now he wants a motorcycle.

Little people can feel voluptuous or dashing. They are sensual. Their sexual drives have not been stunted. "I can look at a beautiful tall woman and have the same feelings as any other man," says Harry Burman.

Mrs. Hull echoes: "I've always felt like a woman. I do things to make myself look good." She is 28.

Ingenuity comes easily. They know ways to lift a baby from a crib without a stool, and how to comb their hair when their arms can't reach the tops of their heads.

The Burmans own their mobile home and a rent house. He came here from England in 1953 and has never been out of work more than three weeks at a time.

"I've found if I go up to a man and lay my cards on the table, he's going to tell me if he'll hire me. One employer told me he'd measure my performance, not my size."

### Finding pantyhose was a problem

Colleen Horndt, however, says she has applied for a job at about 20 Houston firms, and has had no luck. She feels it's partly because of her size.

"I have to talk myself into a job, prove myself. I tell people I'm a dwarf before I go out for an interview because I don't want to scare them. Some say no before I ever get there."

The local LPA chapter has 10 families, 11 single

adults and 25 little persons. They are classified as little people, little teens and little littles. Nationally the club has 2,000 members. The Houston LPA address is P. O. Box 19172, Houston, 77024.

Recruiting members isn't easy. Some little people run from other little people, says Selma Burman.

Gail Hull is the local LPA vice president, but there was a time she avoided people her size.

"I didn't need little people. I thought they only talked about how miserable they were. I thought if I were seen with one of them, people would think I was little. I felt better looking than most of them. I didn't need to socialize because I had it made."

Mrs. Hull has two children. One is average size and the other, Dawn, 16 months, is a dwarf. She was shocked to bear a dwarf. No one, not even her doctor, told her the bone disease that stunted her growth is hereditary, she says.

"It hit us pretty bad. Like all parents, we wanted our child to be perfect."

Before their marriage, the Hulls never discussed

Continued



Continued

her size. "I've always loved Gail for what she is," says Hull, 33. Yet when his dwarf child was born, he says he felt "washed out."

The couple was scared. "I didn't know if I could raise Dawn like my mother raised me. She pushed me harder than my sisters to achieve," says Mrs. Hull, who learned about LPA and joined.

Among the causes of short stature are 60 bone diseases that result in dwarfism, says Dr. Charles Scott, director of the Medical Genetics Clinic at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston. The most common is achondroplasia. Growth hormones won't help.

The disease is hereditary. A dwarf and a tall person have a 50 per cent chance of having dwarf children. Two dwarfs have a 75 per cent chance. Their average size children, though, aren't carriers and probably won't have dwarf children.

Yet Terry and Donna Calhoun, average size adults, have an average size child and a dwarf child.

Scott explains: "Most dwarfs come from average

## The most nagging question: Should we have children?

size parents with no history of short stature. A mutation, a change, occurs in one parent's genes. We don't know why or where it occurs."

Charles Calhoun, 19 months, is a dwarf. "We joined LPA because it is the only way we know to tell him," says his father. The child's development is normal in all other respects.

Calhoun says: "We wanted Charles to see other people his size. When he starts to school, I'm sure he'll be called names. But he'll have to stand on his own two feet. I can't walk through life with him. He'll have to hone his tongue so he can talk back to hecklers."

When one or both parents is a dwarf, often the most nagging question is: Should we have children?

"In a way, I'd rather have a little little (dwarf baby), but I'm afraid my child would resent me," says Colleen Horndt.

Selma Burman says she was "psychologically prepared" to have a dwarf. She knew the odds. "I had counseling with my minister. We talked things through." There were other concerns, though, when she bore an average size child.

The Burmans wondered what their daughter Helen would think of them.

"From the minute she was born, I dreaded the day she would start to school," says her mother. "I didn't want her to be hurt if the children made fun of her father and me."

The first day of school came and Mrs. Burman went with Helen. She stood in the hall, letting children walk by. "They looked, but they went on," she says. "I felt if they saw enough of me, they would get to know me and wouldn't laugh."

She joined the P-TA and Volunteers in Public Schools, became a room mother and still eats lunch with Helen at school now and then.

Helen is in the first grade. She is as tall as her father, who entertains at birthday parties on the side. "It gives kids a chance to ask me questions about my size," he says. The one thing Helen can't understand is why her parents have to explain the way they are.

Other parents don't.

She says, "I told my teacher one time to tell the kids not to laugh at my mama and daddy. Some kids smiled, but I didn't care as long as they didn't laugh."



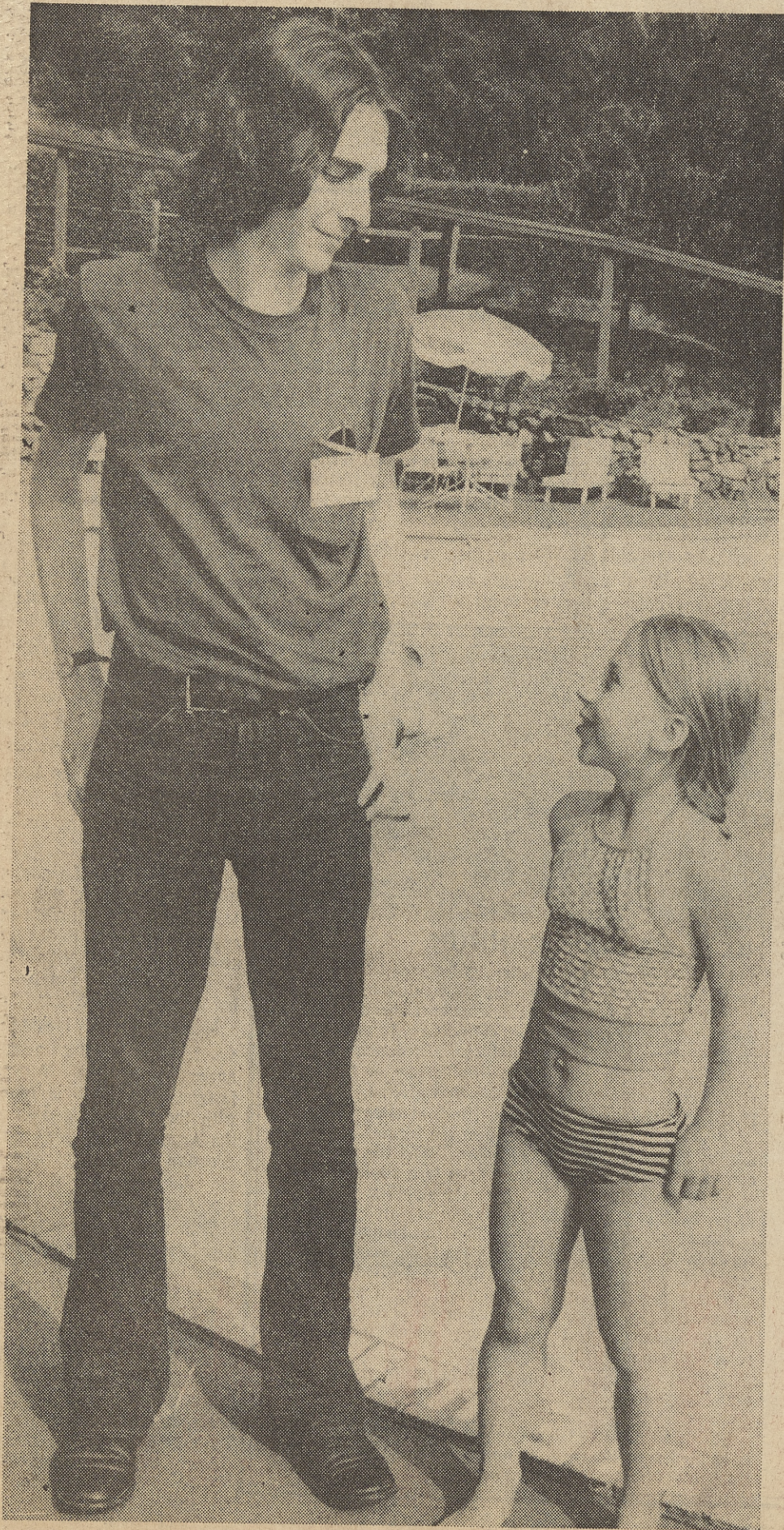


# THE ASHEVILLE CITIZEN

SECTION TWO

Tues., July 23, 1974

PAGE 13



## Contrast

Two years and a difference of two feet may be seen in the above brother-sister relationship. Pamela Chewning, 15, four-feet tall and a member of Little People of America, LPA, craned her neck to talk to her

17-year-old brother Peter. Pamela is participating with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Chewning of Washington, D. C., in the week-long LPA convention at Grove Park Inn. (Staff Photo by Malcolm Gamble)

## Looking Up Gracefully

By VINTON TAYLOR  
Citizen Staff Writer

At first glance, she appears to be a pretty little girl, probably around six years old, give or take a year.

After a few minutes' conversation, she is obviously no child. Pamela Chewning is four feet tall, suffers achondroplasia, dwarfism of bones and cartilage, and will enter the eleventh grade next fall.

Her apparently average proportion and excellent coordination, which aided in her swimming, diving and running around the Grove Park Inn

pool, are unusual, according to her mother, Mrs. Peter Chewning of Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Chewning, Pamela, her father and older brother, Peter, are attending the weeklong Little People of America Convention, which began Saturday.

"Pam's always been very athletically inclined," Mrs. Chewning said. "When she wants something, she just climbs up and gets it. She may pull out a couple of drawers or a step-stool to get there, but nothing stops her."

Pam skates four hours a day and is an excellent gymnast,

according to her mother, achievements not usually associated with or shared by dwarfs.

"She hasn't had some of the problems other dwarfs suffering the same disease have," Mrs. Chewning said, "like operations, corrective surgery and other special treatment."

Although Pam has escaped some of the physically painful experiences shared by her peers, she has not escaped the constant assumption that she is a "little girl" and "she resents this some; she'd rather be treated her own age," her mother said.

Most dwarfism is discovered at birth, and parents and child adjust to the problem from that day on. Pam's diagnosis was not definite until a year and a half ago after numerous tests at both Children's Hospital in Washington, D. C. and Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md.

"She was an exceptionally healthy baby," Mrs. Chewning said, who at the time of Pam's birth had a "normal," two-year-old son, Peter.

"Pam was 19 inches long at birth, but she grew very slowly and this triggered Mrs. Chewning's concern. Then came the tests, the confusing results saying one thing one time and contradictory things the next time, Mrs. Chewning said.

"She's an unusual case in that many of the symptoms of achondroplasia, such as short limbs, prominent forehead and deepening nose bridge, are not apparent," Mrs. Chewning said.

When the results appeared as conclusive as they would for a while, Pam joined LPA in order to help "her adjust to not simply one, but two worlds, the adult world all teens have to merge with and the world of normal stature."

Despite the adjustments and problems of weighing 50 pounds and being 15 years old at the same time, Pam smiled more in one hour than most anybody at any height does in two.

## Little People Gather Here

By VINTON TAYLOR  
Citizen Staff Writer

"The only space barrier we have to conquer is between our ears," Billy Barty said about the Little People of America, an organization he founded in 1957, currently meeting at the Grove Park Inn here.

The 2,000 medically-classified dwarfs are encouraged by Barty and other organization leaders to cope with their height, which ranges from under three feet to four feet, 10 inches, and "never consider themselves abnormal," Barty said.

"We just have to learn how to cope with a world accustomed to average-sized persons... Average does not mean normal, remember that," Barty said. "They don't even know what normal is yet."

Barty founded the organization not only to provide a means of sharing problems, ideas and often difficult lifestyles among dwarfs in the United States, but also, Barty said, "Just to enjoy each other's company."

The two-fold purpose of the organization is reflected by the convention's program.

A seven-member medical advisory board comprised of physicians from around the country will be working with LPA members throughout the

weeklong conference to disseminate medical news, correct misinformation and collect research from one another to further scientific progress in the area of dwarfism, according to Dr. Charles Scott of the University of Texas, board chairman.

Panel discussions concerning education, employment, legislation, insurance, scholarships and adoption, as they relate to little people, have been scheduled.

Meetings have been planned for the Little Littles, the younger of the organization's members and the Parents Auxiliary, average-size parents with one or more children who are dwarfs.

The serious side of the convention is contrasted by the regular evening dancing in the ballroom, Tuesday's talent and fashion shows, and numerous sports events.

Sports to be included are bowling, baseball and swimming.

Approximately 400 persons had registered by Monday afternoon, the first day of official business, according to Mrs. Launa Turner of Swannanoa, who is sharing the job of chairing the convention with her husband, Dan, a former president and charter member of LPA.



# Jurist, Mountain Climber, Marksman, Dwarf

By Elias Antar

**P**ARIS (AP).—The most successful dwarf in France is not a clown but a 71-year-old jurist, mountain climber and ace pistol shooter who hopes to lead 10,000 dwarfs out of their misery.

Jean Brissé-Saint-Macary, 4 feet 5, suffered through a tortured childhood and a lifetime of prejudice and discrimination before reaching a haven of respect and recognition.

Brissé—he often shortens his name—holds a doctorate in law, is a recognized expert on rural economy, was a vice-president of the Congress of French Notaries and is a counsellor at the French Justice Ministry. Brissé made a career as a notary public, an official who in the French system undertakes many of the functions of a lawyer.

Last year, he retired to a village in the Pyrenees mountains and is now midway through a book on his life which he hopes will inspire other dwarfs.

He estimates that there are some 10,000 dwarfs in France, although no census has ever been taken and the state does not recognize them as handicapped persons.

## Hopes for Book

"I hope my book will draw attention to their plight, which can be summed up in one word—miserable", Brissé said. "Then I will use my contacts in government and the Justice Ministry to try and form an association of dwarfs, duly recognized by the state and eligible for assistance."

Brissé said that it would be difficult to group together all the dwarfs in France. Some have gained notoriety as clowns and circus acrobats, but most, he says, eke out an existence as scrap merchants, peddlers or odd-job men.

"Most of them have great difficulty finding any kind of regular, rewarding employment," Brissé said. "I know of one man who is a treasurer in the Toulouse municipality, but otherwise the life of a dwarf in France is not a favored one."

"As for prejudice . . . well, I can tell you that it is very deep-rooted," he added.



Jean Brissé-Saint-Macary, 71, who is writing a book on the problems of dwarfs.

A few years ago, a bunch of kids followed him in the street and threw stones at him. "I finally turned on them and slapped one in the face. His mother stepped out of a doorway, slapped me, knocked me to the ground and poured insults on me," Brissé recounted.

"In 1970, I was sitting in a café and four English girls came and sat at the next table. They soon made it very clear that they wanted to sleep with a dwarf," he said. "When I told them I was a law official, they got up and left in a hurry."

Brissé was prompted to write about his life after a director in Paris staged an adaptation of the opera "Turandot," starring one woman and 18 dwarfs. The production won favorable reviews and publicity, and this

persuaded Brissé that there was at least some public interest in the plight of dwarfs.

Brissé was born with Achondroplasia, an affliction which leaves a person with a normal head and torso, but shrunken or deformed limbs. His family were all normal, he said, and his father—a doctor and a general in the French Army—insisted that young Jean fit the family mold.

As a child, he was strapped in bed and underwent an excruciatingly painful process to soften his bones and stretch him out. "This treatment lasted three months," Brissé writes in his book. "My bones became so soft that my head had to be squeezed back into its normal shape every time I turned over."

But still he remained a dwarf.

His legs were bound into painful and cumbersome steel bars for four years, but it didn't do any good.

School was a psychological minefield. His fellows taunted him and Brissé says his teacher enjoyed making him suffer. "Brissé, you are abnormal, an imbecile, a dangerous being. Everything that comes from you is evil. I will break you," the teacher told him.

One afternoon, Brissé climbed to the roof of the school. "Just as I was leaping into the stairwell, someone grabbed my leg," he writes. "It was Father Segond, the most humble man in the school. He had understood what I was going to do. I don't know which of us was crying the most."

Despite continued opposition from his father, Brissé went on to law school, but one day fell ill with a tubercular inflammation of his breastbone.

"At age 22, I was told I was as good as dead, that I had the choice of rotting to death or undergoing an operation and dying anyway," Brissé recounts. But he recovered, attributing it to a night spent in meditation in the grotto at Lourdes.

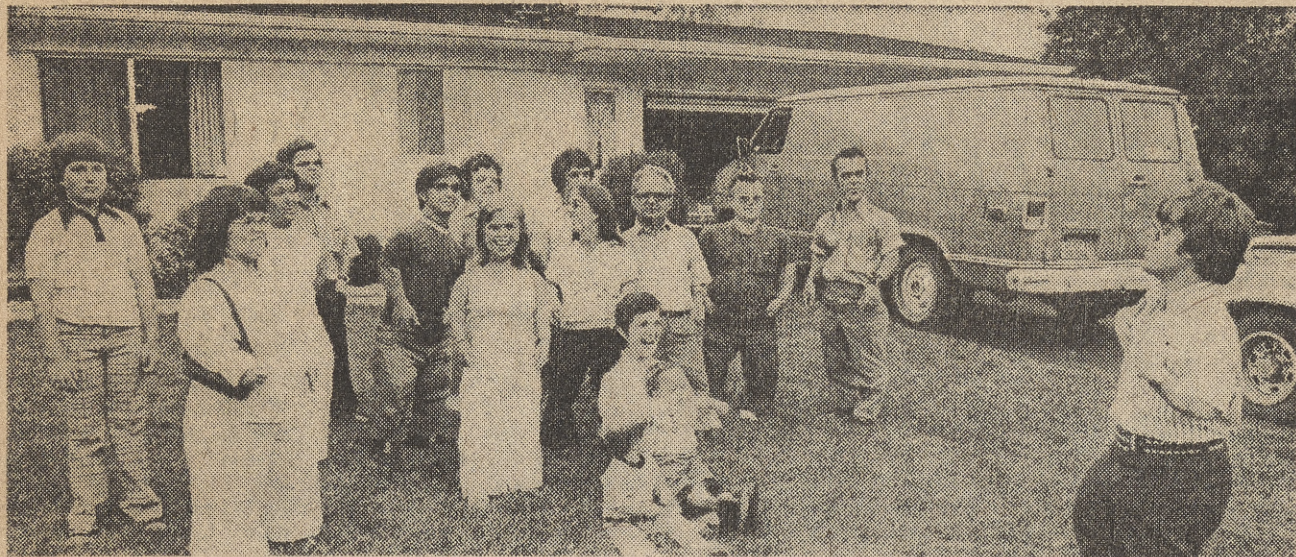
## Tried Monastery

He tried to find peace in a Trappist monastery, but after two years he was told that he didn't have what it took to become a monk. Brissé says that in these painful, formative years, he took to climbing the 10,000-foot peaks in the Pyrenees to find solace in the natural beauty of the surroundings. He also took up pistol and rifle shooting, at which he became a marksman.

As his career flourished, Brissé married a normal woman and had a daughter, who was also normal. But a son who had symptoms of dwarfism died at the age of eight.

From the serenity of his retirement, Brissé tells the other dwarfs of France in the preface of his book, "Memoirs of an Achondroplasiac": "Wherever destiny has placed us, it is essential for us, my infirm brothers, to work, to create and to give. We must face things squarely without ever giving way to the desire to escape."





Free Press Photo by IRA ROSENBERG

Jerry Couretas, 8, far left, is average-sized. Beside him are, from left, Marge Taunt, Mary Couretas (his mother), Chuck Franckowiak, Paul Kehr, Linda Lyngaas, Amy Brieden, Mary Totaro, behind her is

Ron Sova, Gus Couretas (Jerry's father), Stanley Powell, Neil Chervenak and Brian Morris, far right; Barbara Morris is seated with her children. They're all little people.

# Happy Little Lives: Understanding Dwarfs

BY JIM GALLAGHER  
Free Press Staff Writer

Brian Morris kept insisting he was 4-foot-6, but the other dwarfs were skeptical.

"Brian," his wife, Barbara, scolded in a voice that teetered on the brink of giggly laughter. "You always said you were 4-foot-4. How come you're two inches tall all of a sudden?"

So Morris, 31, flopped out of his chair and took off his shoes. "Ron here says he's 4-foot-4," he said, pointing a finger at 18-year-old Ron Sova of Troy. "And I'm two inches taller than he is."

THEN HE MADE Sova take off his shoes, and they stood together, back to back. True enough. Morris was taller — but just barely.

"Well, maybe I'm 4-foot-5," he concluded as he lifted himself back into the chair. He grinned sheepishly. The other dwarfs bubbled over with laughter.

For these dwarfs, apparently, being little is no big deal, and they're not afraid to joke about their own stature. They're members of the Little People of America — generally referred to as LPA — a national organization of men and women 4-foot-10 or smaller. About 2,000 of the nation's estimated 25,000 dwarfs are members.

SINCE SATURDAY, LPA has been holding its annual convention at the Sheraton-Southfield.

"This organization enables little people to meet others like themselves who have made it in life, who are married or successful in business," said Morris, LPA's national treasurer. "That's very important. We're really more than a social club."

Morris, now lives in West Bloomfield, grew up in England and moved to Lancaster, Pa., when he was 16. One of 10 children, the rest of whom were average sized — LPA frowns on the word "normal" in this context — he knew no other dwarfs and developed an inferiority complex.

"My family tried to put my size in perspective for me," he said, "but I never dated and I always felt left out. Now I can see that this was more self-imposed than imposed by my peer group, but at the time I didn't realize this."

"My dad would sit down with me and tell me my size didn't matter, but he was 5-foot-10, and I thought: 'What can he know?' When anybody who's not at the same disadvantage tries to tell you not to worry, you just assume he doesn't know what he's talking about. I kept putting these limitations on myself."

When Morris was 18, his mother saw a dwarf performing in an amusement park and asked him about her son's situation. The dwarf told her about LPA.

"The first time I went to a meeting," Morris recalled, "I met a little person who had a Ph.D."

"I started to realize I had a lot to offer life. My self respect improved. If it were not for LPA, I would not have attained the status I have now."

Morris, a college graduate, is a certified public accountant. According to LPA members, average-sized people tend to underestimate dwarfs, and families with dwarf children tend to be over-protective. Little people dislike being patted on the head, and resent those people who reach over their heads on line to get served first.

*"Aside from their physical uniqueness, dwarfs run the whole range of intelligence and personality. Many are bright and successful . . . other dwarfs are dull."*

"People are used to relating size and age," Morris said. "Some people figure because you're small you must be stupid. They try to take advantage of you. We have to get away from the stereotyping of dwarfs."

"The first two questions a dwarf is asked," he said, "are, 'Do you wrestle' and 'Are you in show business?' Actually, less than one percent of all dwarfs are in show business."

Neil Chervenak, 38, nodded his head in agreement. Now a bartender and maintenance man in Detroit, Chervenak spent several years working as a clown in a traveling road-show. For three years the 4-foot-6 Chervenak wrestled a 300-pound bear and earned \$100 a week.

LIKE MORRIS, most of the people in LPA are achondroplastic dwarfs, characterized by short limbs, large heads and flat noses. However, according to Dr. Victor A. McKusick of Johns Hopkins Clinic in Baltimore, there are almost 100 other forms of dwarfism. McKusick has been studying the phenomenon for several years, and LPA has raised money to help make his research possible.

Detroit Free Press

for and about Women

Monday, July 21, 1975

1-B

When achondroplastic dwarfs marry, there is one chance in four that an average-sized child will result from the union. There is a 50 percent chance of producing another dwarf.

Dwarf children have a single dwarf gene, which is dominant. Children born with two dwarf genes do not live very long after birth. "Barbara and I had two double-dominant children," Morris said. "The little girl lived for four months. The boy died right away."

Since then the Morrises have adopted two dwarf youngsters. LPA has a program to facilitate the adoption of "little littles," the group's name for dwarf children. Youngsters can be enrolled in LPA as soon as they're born.

For teenagers who participate actively, LPA provides them with a social life.

"I felt dumb being the only little person. I never saw anybody like me before," Ron Sova said. So when a dwarf girl about his own age approached Ron in a bowling alley and told him about LPA, he was eager to join. Now he's going steady with an LPA member from West Virginia.

"I'm able to show my peers that I can get a date too," said Amy Brieden of Grosse Pointe, 3-foot-10 and 16 years old.

The name "achondroplasia" — literally it means no development of the cartilage — is not really an accurate one, McKusick said, because the real problem is an underdevelopment of the cartilage, which causes arms and legs to become crooked as the dwarf matures.

Other dwarfs, McKusick said, are afflicted with insufficient pituitary gland functioning. The body development of these dwarfs is more proportional, and the term midget often is applied to them.

RESEARCH TO DATE, McKusick said, indicates the dwarfism is related to the age of the father at the time the child is conceived. One study revealed that the average age of dwarf-producing fathers was almost 37. It would appear, McKusick said, that the sort of sperm cell mutation that produces dwarfism becomes more likely as men grow older.

"Aside from their physical uniqueness, dwarfs run the whole range of intelligence and personality," McKusick said. "Many are very bright and successful. And, like so many people of average size, other dwarfs are dull."

Gus Couretas, 53, joined LPA in 1961, when the organization was only four years old. "It changed my life," he said. "It changed my outlook, my goals . . ."

"Yeah," Barbara Morris interrupted, "and you got married, too." Couretas a 4-foot-2 truck dispatcher who lives in Pontiac, met his wife Mary at an LPA convention. Mrs. Morris met Brian at another convention.

"I used to date tall girls," Couretas said, "but the trouble is, some people resent it. They look at you funny, they make jokes."

THE COURETASES have an average-sized son, eight-year-old Jerry. "Some of my friends ask me, 'How come your mom and dad are so little?' Jerry said. "But I don't try to explain. If I do they just don't listen. They've done it so long now it doesn't bother me any more. My good friends — they understand."

Daily American  
Aug 30, 1975

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## Armless man invents way to drive car with his feet

By GEORGE VINE

HEIDELBERG, West Germany, Aug. 29 (Reuter) -- No one gives Eberhard Franz's Volkswagen a second glance as it slips like a weasel through the crowded streets of this old German university town.

Then the driver gets out and they see that he has no arms.

They look again and see that his car has no steering wheel.

The 39-year-old technician, who had both arms amputated at the shoulder 20 years ago, drives with his feet, using special controls designed by himself.

In the last 10 years he has driven about 170,000 miles all over Europe without an accident of any kind. Franz is now patenting his system of adapting cars for armless drivers and with the cooperation of the orthopedic clinic of Heidelberg University, he hopes to make it available to similarly handicapped persons everywhere in the world.

"Driving a car gives us back our independence and mobility," explained the stocky, fair-haired inventor who lost his arms at the age of 19 when he was electrocuted by a high-tension cable. "In a car we are the equal of others."

His system, which has been exhaustively tested and licensed by the West German technical safety authorities, promises to add a new dimension to the lives of many thousands in other countries outside Germany.

The first training car has been provided by Volkswagen. The Foundation for Handicapped Children has financed the development and the work has been executed by Franz's employers, Brown, Boverie and Company, the international industrial concern.

Franz, who works today as an industrial safety technician has proved that an armless person can be just as safe on the roads as many two-handed drivers. He passed the normal driving test and carries the same license as any other motorist.

Nor has his insurance company imposed any extra-risk premium on him. On the contrary his safety record has earned him a 60 per cent no-claims bonus.

He lays stress on the fact that the Franz system does not produce a special invalid car. The adaptor kit is made to be fitted to the family car enabling it to be converted to either hand or foot driving in less and one minute -- the time it takes to unscrew the pedal and screw on the steering wheel.

The system is not cheap. It is only being made at present to fit the Volkswagen passat and at a price of over \$6,000 it costs almost as much as the car itself.



Geen moment sta je erbij stil dat je tegenover een dwerg zit, als je met Lee Kitchens zit te praten. Een normale volwassen man lijkt het, scherpzinnige ogen achter een montuurloze bril, wilskrachtige kin, vriendelijk gezicht. Maar zijn voeten raken de grond op geen stukken na. Lee Kitchens meet slechts 1.24 cm. Als je met hem praat is er niets ongewoons. Het wordt pas moeilijk bij het afscheid nemen, als hij tegenover je staat, het hoofd in de nek. Je voelt je dan wat ongemakkelijk,

## ZO'N KLEINE MAN EN DAN ZO'N BREIN

ongewild uit de hogte doend naar die kleine verschijning ter hoogte van je heupen. Een krachtige handdruk, dat wel, een joviale zwaai met de arm ook, maar je ontkomt toch niet aan gevoelens van verwarring en verwondering. Zo'n kleine man en dan zo'n geestkracht en zo'n brein.

De onlangs uit Dallas in Texas naar Almelo gekomen Lee Kitchens (44) is indrukwekkend in zijn kleinheid. De kleinste werknemer van Texas Instruments is op dit moment voor de Almelo-vestiging waarschijnlijk een van de belangrijkste functionarissen. Hij was het tenslotte, die vorig jaar voor het wereldcon-

cern Texas Instruments de zakrekenmachine ontwierp die nu op grote schaal in Almelo gemaakt gaat worden voor de Europese markt. Lee Kitchens is overgevoegen om een jaar lang de produktie te begeleiden, speciaal voor de kwaliteitscontrole. Hij is elektronica-ingenieur van huis uit, werkt al 22 jaar bij het

concern en zal nu een jaar lang 'engineering manager' in de Almelo-fabriek zijn, waar de bouw van nieuwe hallen voor de produktie van zijn 'pocket-calculators' in hoog tempo gaande is.

Diezelfde ir. Kitchens is ook nog topman bij de organisatie van Amerikanen die net als hij

door wat voor medische oorzaak dan ook klein zijn gebleven, dwergen zo men wil. Tot voor kort was hij president van de 'Little People of America Inc', waarbij 3000 mannen en vrouwen van allerlei slag zijn aangesloten. Nederland kent sinds enige tijd een overeenkomstige vereniging, die evenals de Ameri-

kaanse LPA opkomt voor de belangen van de kleine mens. Mensen, die het zo op het eerste oog niet makkelijk lijken te hebben, maar Lee Kitchens laat nauwelijks iets heel van die veronderstelling. „Het enige verschil tussen u en mij", zegt hij bij herhaling, „is een halve meter". En speciale problemen bestaan niet voor hem, zet hij uiteen. Hooguit wat onaangenameheden: „nuisances, no problems". Alleen al om andere kleine mensen te helpen wil hij er graag over praten.

# Lee Kitchens bewees als uitvinder en als vlieger dat 'n dwerg alles kan als hij wil

ALMELO — Met een bewonderenswaardige, maar onwillekeurig toch wat komisch aandoende soepelheid springt Lee Kitchens weer van de bureaustoel, waar hij zich net met een sprongetje opgehesen heeft. Een foto bij zijn auto om duidelijk te laten zien, hoe klein hij is? Allright, hij vindt het uitstekend.

De kleine man gaat ons voor door de fabriekshallen. De ene produktieafdeling na de andere. Overal zijn nijvere lieden met montagewerk bezig. Een enkeling kijkt wat tersluiks, wat schuw naar de voorbijgangers, van wie de kleinste nu eenmaal door zijn verschijning een in het oog lopende figuur is.

Zelfverzekerd en met vaste tred gaat Lee Kitchens intussen voort naar het parkeerterrein achter de fabriek, waar de bedrijfswagen staat die hem ter beschikking is gesteld. Hij doet wat de fotograaf

Er zijn zoveel mensen met afwijkingen en handicaps, zegt hij. Kale mensen, linkshandigen, roodharigen. Sommigen maken het zichzelf moeilijk, maar nodig is het niet. 't Is eenvoudig een kwestie van je hersens gebruiken, ervan profiteren zonodig. En als je ouders je dat nu maar geleerd hebben, als zijzelf geaccepteerd hebben dat je nu eenmaal kleiner bent en blijft dan de meeste anderen in de wereld, dan hoeft er niets te ontbreken aan je levensgeluk. Zo ongeveer is zijn filosofie. Hij wijst op zijn oren. 't Gaat om hetgeen daartussen zit, zegt hij. En als de mensen naar je willen kijken, laat ze kijken. Een halve meter lichaamslengte, dat is het enige verschil.

Lee Kitchens vertelt openhartig, dat hem honderden keren dezelfde vragen worden gesteld, die hij honderden keren op dezelfde manier beantwoordt: rustig, zelfverzekerd, met begrip voor de vragensteller. Hij heeft het er niet moeilijk mee, anderen kennelijk wel.

Kinderen vooral schieten kleine mensen geregeld aan, bijvoorbeeld om te vragen hoe oud ze zijn. En waar ze ook komen — iedereen kijkt. Nederlanders doen dat beslist niet meer dan bijvoorbeeld Amerikanen, is zijn ervaring. Dwergen zijn tenslotte zeldzaam, ze moeten

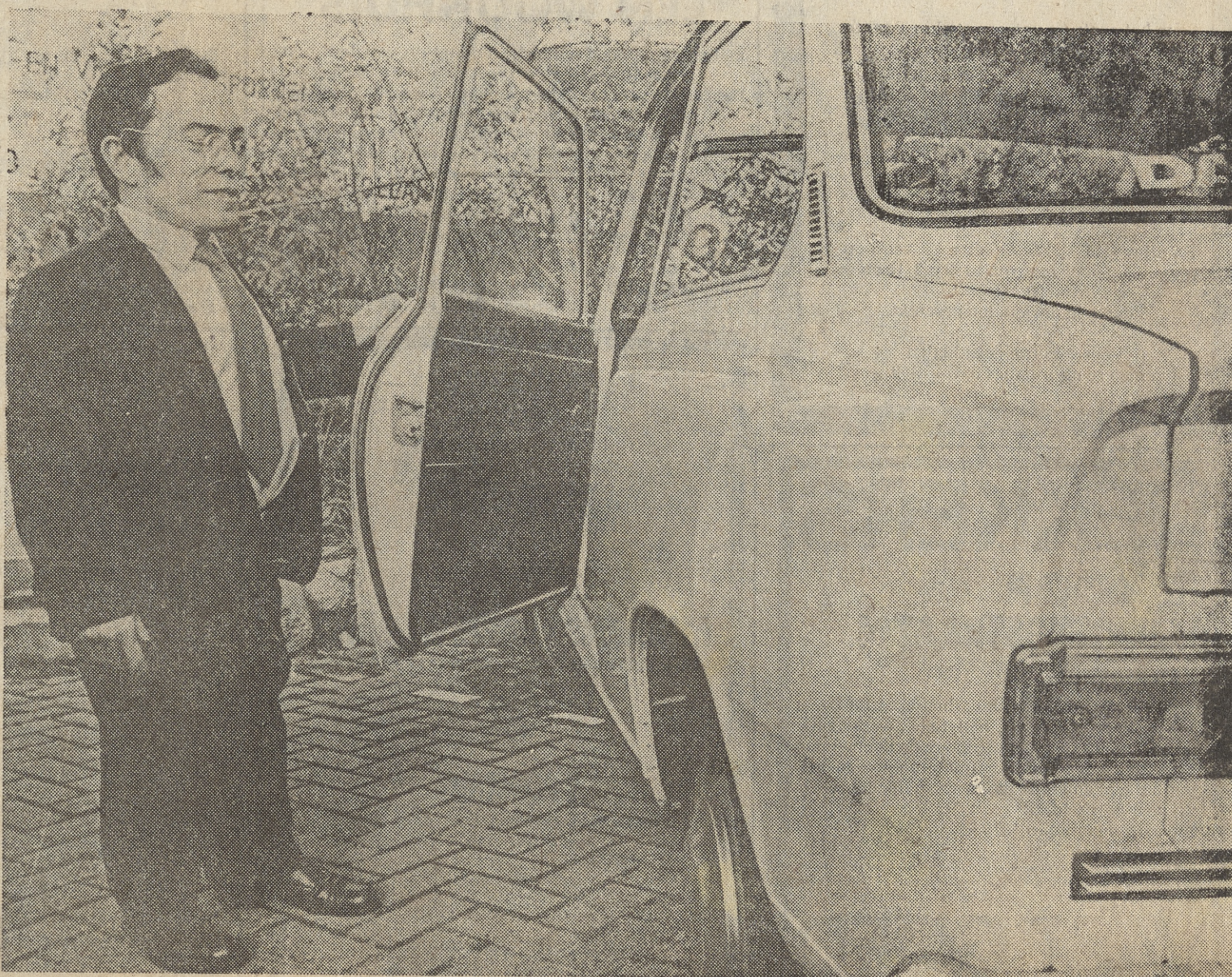
reden om dergelijke scènes te voorkomen door thuis te blijven. Natuurlijk heeft hij gelijk, maar onwillekeurig denk je.....

## • Telefoon

Soms, als hij in een stad wandelt — en hij kent heel wat steden ter wereld — moet Lee Kitchens wel eens opbellen. Nergens ter wereld trof hij tot dusver een telefooncel, waar hij zonder hulp van buitenstaanders een gesprek kon voeren — hij kan nooit bij de gleuf waar het muntstuk in moet. Maar, zegt hij, er is altijd wel iemand in de buurt die je helpt.

Waarom zou ik verbergen, vraag hij zich af, dat ik klein ben? Er zijn lilliputters, die dat doen, met allerlei kunstmiddelen, maar er is volgens hem geen enkele reden voor. Ik heb net zoveel recht om van het leven te genieten als ieder ander. En als ik het niet doe, redeneert hij, dan is dat mijn fout en niet de fout van een ander.

Een echtpaar, dat een kind krijgt, waarvan de ledematen niet voldoende willen groeien, moet zich er nooit voor schamen, zet hij uiteen.



zich nooit schuldig voelen. 't Is gewoon iets dat gebeurt. Er kunnen 85 verschillende medische oorzaken voor zijn. Kunnen de ouders het accepteren, dan kan het kind het ook.

En dan niet naar een speciale school, adviseert hij, want de samenleving wordt ook niet aangepast aan de kleine mens.

Natuurlijk gaat niet alles van een leien dakje. Daarom was hij er in 1957 al snel bij, toen een Ameri-

kaanse entertainer de organisatie voor kleine mensen oprichtte. Die helpen elkaar nu waar dat mogelijk is, geven elkaar adressen door van goedkope kleermakers, bemiddelen bij personeelsproblemen, houden contactdagen waar huwelijken uit voortspruiten, bespreken elkaars moeilijkheden.

Lee Kitchens was geruime tijd president van de Little People of America. Propagandafolders heeft hij in overvloed bij zich. Er blijkt

o.m. uit, dat bij de 3000 leden van deze vereniging accountants, artiesten, leraren, bankiers en ingenieurs voorkomen. De huidige president is hoogleraar!

Voor voetbal hebben deze kleine mensen gewoonlijk te korte been-tjes, maar er blijven nog tal van sporten over, zwemmen, fietsen en golf bijvoorbeeld. Zeilen en schaat-sen zijn populair in Nederland — Lee Kitchens hoopt ze snel onder

bovendien wilde hij elektronica studeren. Hij werkte er keihard voor en haalde ondertussen ook nog even zijn vliegbrevet, evenals zijn vrouw. Hij vloog over heel Noord-Amerika, in zijn eigen kist. En bij Texas Instruments beleefde hij een glanzende carrière. Dat heeft niets te maken met lichaamslengte, zegt hij nog maar eens. Als je maar bereid bent, iets van anderen te leren.



## Little Folk Meet Large Challenge

By GERRY BURTON

Staff Writer

SNYDER—Johnny Weismuller tossed him in the air and bashed him against a wall a couple of times in a 1931 Tarzan movie.

Otherwise, J.P. Billingsley's 74 years have been as normal as they can be for a man who sees the world from a dwarf's height.

Reach and mobility are about the only things that have bothered him since he got used to youngsters calling him "the little folk" at Dunn schools.

He learned early what the Little People of America is

accomplishing rapidly for other "little folk" today: not to be self-conscious about his size while meeting the challenges of life as an individual.

Crippled by arthritis as he looks at his 75th birthday in December, he has plenty of time to recall the history he has lived during 28 years in the Scurry County courthouse.

His timing was a little off, but he was involved with most lives in the county at one time or another.

As district clerk from 1937 through 1940, he helped with

See SIZE Page 15

## Size Proves No Handicap To Snyder Pair Recalling Long, Rewarding Life

(From Page One)

their divorces. From 1941 through 1950 he issued marriage licenses as county clerk. The next four years he worked with where their county tax dollars went as county auditor. He finally got around to marrying them as justice of the peace from 1967 to 1974.

Billingsley was growing up on a farm outside Dunn, 10 miles south of Snyder, when the cattle drives to Colorado City were going through, using the nearby creek for a stopover.

At home, where he "wasn't big enough to plow," his chores all through school were "gathering chips and bringing in the eggs." It didn't take him long to figure his future wasn't in farming.

Study and practice won him a job as telegrapher for the Texas and Pacific railroad, first in nearby Colorado City and then "from the El Paso yards to Sherman," where he met this young woman "just the right size."

Laid off in the depression, Billingsley returned to Scurry, where not many residents know of his stint with moviedom.

"We were trying to steal the missionaries and Tarzan was trying to stop us," he recalled. "We were mean little things."

The Billingsleys stay in Hol-

lywood was short. Jimmy Jr. was six with a good chance of a movie career, but a second child, Frances, was about to be born, so the family returned to Scurry County.

Life in the courthouse was a good one which broke into pandemonium with the 1949 oil boom. Every person involved with oil had to go through the county clerk's office, where Billingsley hired a raft of deputies to stay almost even with a small portion of the day's business.

"I always told Frances and Junior not to say they couldn't do something because they were too little, there's always a way," Mrs. Billingsley, who has lots of stools and ladders around the house, added about private life while Billingsley was in the public eye.

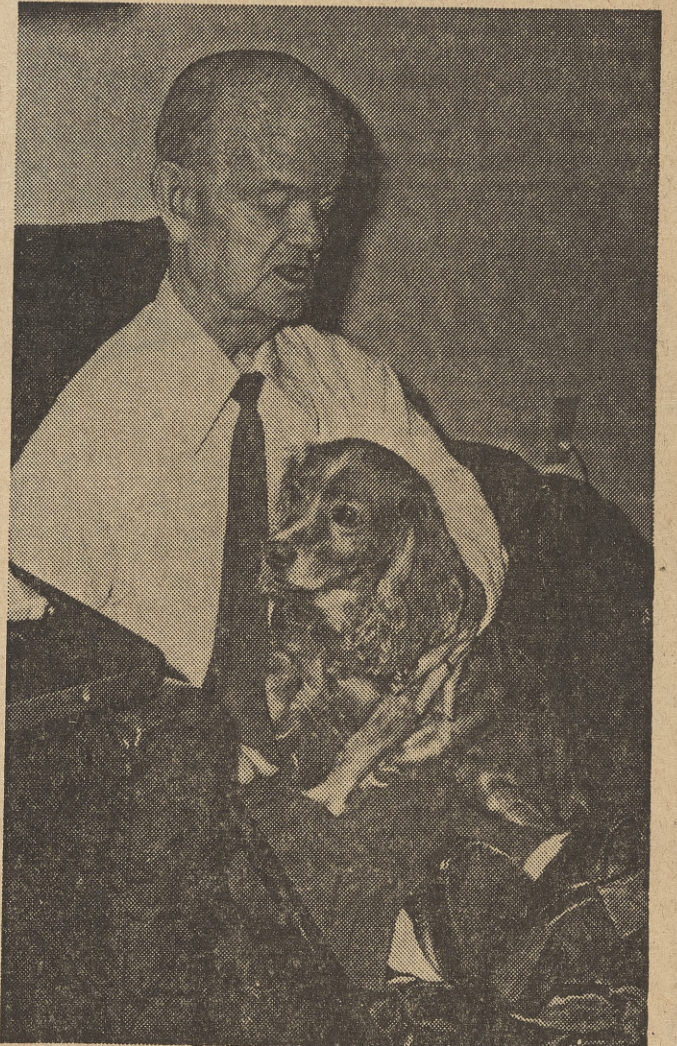
Jimmy Jr. is a production engineer in the oil business and Frances is a deputy county clerk at Snyder.

There are grandchildren "as big as anybody" and a great-grandson who, at three, already is shoulder high. They won't face any of the small problems of a big world like Billingsley and his children. On the other hand, they might not reach his age with all the memories he has, either.

Being shorter hasn't put the Billingsleys on the short end of anything, the way they look at it.



ALWAYS A WAY—Mrs. J.P. Billingsley of Snyder—who taught her two children, also dwarfs, that being short was no excuse for not accomplishing—demonstrates one of the every-day differences for her in a world built for taller folks. (Staff Photo)



COMFORTS OF HOME—J.P. Billingsley holds the family pet as he recalls 75 years of life, 28 of them as a Scurry County official, from a dwarf's height. (Staff Photo)



## Both 40 Inches Tall

## Midgets Big as Wedding Nears

By JANET FIRESTEIN  
Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Being in love can make you feel 10 feet tall — and for Elisabeth Ritter and Sandor Rasky, especially, it's a great feeling.

The couple, who will tie the knot in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus ring in Oakland on Aug. 26, are both only 40 inches tall.

But before the vows can be said, there is the small matter of a ring, so the tiny twosome went shopping yesterday at Tiffany's in Beverly Hills.

Rasky, 31, slipped several dozen diamond rings on his future bride's size 2½ finger, looking for just the right stone in just the right setting.

"Mama mia," he exclaimed again and again as 5-foot-10-inch sales clerk Geri Meldon whispered prices in his ear.

After much consultation and deliberation, they finally settled on a quarter-carat diamond ring and two gold bands — one for her and one (size 4) for him.

Miss Ritter, 39, and her beau met in their native Hungary almost 15 years ago, but things became serious only last January, when the diminutive pair began touring the United States with the circus company.

Miss Ritter had been a ringmistress with several European circuses and Rasky a gymnast equilibrist with shows in Sweden, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary before they joined the American company.

As a kind of rehearsal for their own ceremony, they

have been playing Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb with the world's smallest man, and ceremony of Michu, the tall, and Juliana, 38 inches tall, will be best man and maid of honor for their circus In return, Michu, 33 inches; mates.



Herald-Examiner photo by Bob Steiner

Sandor Rasky signals his approval of engagement ring that clerk Geri Meldon is placing on the finger of his bride-to-be, Elisabeth Ritter.



**AMBITIOUS AND COURAGEOUS** Carol Maschinot, 18, is congratulated by her proud mother, Mrs. Bettie Maschinot, at home in Newport, Ky.

## 37-Inch-Tall Teenager Graduates As School's 'Outstanding Senior'

By MALCOLM BALFOUR

Carol Maschinot stood tall among her high school graduating class although she's only 37 inches high.

The tiny 18-year-old, whose physical development was halted by a bone disease, was all smiles when she received her school's "outstanding senior" award at graduation ceremonies June 3.

But she was irked during graduation practice a few days earlier.

"I hated it when I walked up and they all cheered," Carol said. "That made me mad. Why all the fuss?"

But her classmates couldn't really be blamed for cheering. Here was a girl who could get around only with the aid of a mechanical walker or wheelchair, and who chose to be carried from class to class rather than miss out on high school.

Yet she had managed to win top honors for her determination and academic achievement.

Who better deserved her own cheering section?

But the 3-foot, 1-inch teenager doesn't want to be treated as someone special.

"I'm just like any other girl my age," Carol told an ENQUIRER reporter at her home in Newport, Ky. "I like boys and dances and things like that. And I don't want anything special out of life, really."

"It's a big world — take my word for it," she smiled — "big enough, I believe, to take care of me. There are many things I can do, and I know I'll be given an opportunity to do them."

Her immediate goal is to get a secretarial job.

But her dream is to someday become a professional singer, she said.

Stricken at birth with a bone-softening disease called

osteogenesis imperfecta, Carol was expected to live no more than a month.

She suffered 13 bone fractures during childbirth, and faced the hazard of further breaks for as long as she lived.

"But I haven't had a broken bone since I was 2," the diminutive doll said triumphantly.

"Carol surprised all of us," said her mother, Mrs. Bettie Maschinot, who also has two normal-height daughters, Mary Ann, 23, and Connie, 20.

"As Carol grew older, it was apparent she was an especially bright child," her mother continued. "Her biggest ambition was to go on to high school. But I was the only person, beside her, who really thought she'd make it."

Carol earned her high school diploma at Our Lady of Providence Academy, just three doors from her home.

"Everywhere I went, everything I did, I needed help," she said. "My friends and some of the teaching nuns had to carry my books and sometimes me, from class to class, especially in my senior year when I had classes on all three school floors."

She sat on a large chair pillow to see her teacher and the blackboard over classmates' heads.

"She was tops in spirit," said Sister Georgia Maria, Carol's teacher for two years. "She was always thinking of others. Her enthusiasm was wonderful. When I would ask for someone to help me out, Carol was always the first one to volunteer."

"She wanted to get involved in every activity. The night of the senior class play, she put makeup on cast members — right from her wheelchair."

Said Mrs. Maschinot, wife of a Newport postal clerk: "Carol has shown us there's a place in this world for everyone, if you'll just try to find it."





Champagne toasts by best man Michu Meszaros (left), bride and groom, matron Juliana Pinnvicska

Tribune photos by HOWARD ERKER

## Big Wedding For Little Folk

By PEARL STEWART

In engraved lettering, the invitation read: "Messrs. Kenneth and Irvin Feld, producers, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, request the honour of your presence at the marriage of Elisabeth Ritter and Sandor Rasky, Lilliputian performers, on Thursday, the twenty-sixth of August, nineteen hundred and seventy-six at eleven o'clock in the morning at the Oakland Coliseum, north performance entrance."

The odor of nearby caged animals was the only flaw—although a lingering one—in an otherwise elegantly executed nuptial ceremony for the two 40-inch-tall performers in the circus, which is at the Oakland Coliseum Arena through next Monday.

Photographers began a mad scramble for the best angles as the ringbearer, 4-year-old Matias Groek, and Desina Kehaiova, the 5-year-old flower girl proceeded down the aisle.

They were followed by the best man, 33-inch-tall Michu Meszaros, and Juliana Pinnvicska, the 38-inch-tall matron of honor. "The Marriage of Michu" is a regular act in the circus, recreating the 1863 wedding of Charles Stratton, the so-called Gen. Tom Thumb, while he performed with P. T. Barnum's show. Ms. Pinnvicska portrays his bride.

In the act, Sandor Rasky plays Michu's best man while Elisabeth Ritter portrays Ms. Pinnvicska's bridesmaid.

A smiling and relaxed groom sauntered down the aisle in a baby-blue tuxedo.

Then came the traditional "ahhs" as the bride, resplendent in a white original gown with cathedral train and veil, appeared at the tunnel entrance.

The Rev. Wells Graham, the circus chaplain, began conducting the traditional Episcopal ceremony, pausing here and there to allow translation into Hungarian, the language of the couple.

A bigger-than-midget-sized cake awaited the guests at the reception which immediately followed the ceremony in the arena. There was more cheering and applause as the couple mounted portable steps to reach the huge delicacy. The cork was popped on an equally large champagne bottle, followed by toasts to the happy pair.

The couple rode out of the Coliseum in the customized battery-operated miniature convertible used in the show.

The band's vocalist sang, very softly, "This might be the start of something gargantuan . . ."



THE SANDOR RASKYS' WEDDING DANCE  
Lilliputian marriage at Coliseum

## AMERICA'S LITTLE PEOPLE STAND UP FOR RIGHTS

THE Little People Of America last week rose up—to protest the way the world looks down on them.

At their annual convention in Miami Beach, Fla., they voiced complaints about how their everyday needs are put out of reach.

Their were even problems at the hotel the 400 midget delegates stayed in.

The management had gone to elaborate lengths to accommodate them—like placing ramps at doors so the delegates could reach the handles, erecting steps at the cashier's cage and hanging the towels low. But someone forgot about the telephones.

"They still haven't solved the phone problem," said Diann Locicero, of New Orleans, La. "That drives me crazy. Phones, phones everywhere, but I can't reach any of them."

But not everyone was unhappy. The world's smallest nightclub bouncer Pat Bilon, who is only 2-ft 10 ins tall, dismissed suggestions he wasn't up to the job.

"I never have problems with unruly drunks," he said. "But, once, I had to yank a chair from under a 6-ft customer."

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## People in the news



Elisabeth Ritter and Sandor Rasky, who play roles of Bride-smade and Best Man for Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey circus, both 40 inches tall, pick out engagement and wedding rings in Los Angeles with help of clerk Geri Melden. They'll wed Aug. 26.—(AP Laserphoto)

## Tiny couple to wed for real

BEVERLY HILLS, (UPI) — It was a big day for little Elisabeth Ritter and Sandor Rasky, who play Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb in the circus and have decided to become Mr. and Mrs. in real life as well.

Rasky and Miss Ritter, each 40 inches tall, picked out an engagement ring yesterday at Tiffany's. Both will get gold wedding bands, (\$125 each), his a specially made size 3, hers a size 2½, and the lady gets a \$310 diamond engagement ring.

"It is very difficult for little people to find someone their size whom they can be happy with," the 39-year-old Hungarian-born bride-to-be said through an interpreter.

When asked if they planned to have children, Rasky, 31, also Hungarian, replied, "Of course."

The two, who met 15 years ago in a circus in Hungary, will be married during an Aug. 26 performance of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in Oakland.



# At age 23, she's 3 feet, 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches, and growing

By JAN HAMILL  
News-Texan Bureau

**Editor's note:** The following is the first of a two-part series on the progress being made in the fight against pituitary dwarfism.

Sharon Burnett is growing. A natural process, but not to Sharon. For she is a 23-year-old woman who lives in the body of a 13-year-old girl.



**STILL GROWING** — Sharon Burnett, 23, is a victim of pituitary dwarfism. She is only 3 feet, 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches tall, but still growing, thanks to treatments she receives at Baylor University Medical Center. In time, she hopes to grow to five feet in height.

Photo by LES BLASER

**SHE IS THREE** feet, 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches tall and wears a size eight in children's clothes.

But she can drive a car, work regularly as a clerk-stenographer in the beverage and tobacco section of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, and "as far as I know, do anything anybody else does," she says.

Sharon Burnett is a pituitary dwarf. At a very young age—no one is sure exactly when or why—her pituitary gland stopped producing

the hormones that make us grow taller and stronger and mature.

When she entered the first grade, Sharon was less than three feet tall. "Then it doesn't make that much difference," she said. "The teacher and kids thought I was cute. They were just a head taller than me and there still was not that much difference."

"But it gets worse and makes a bigger difference the older you get. As I got older, everybody else got a lot taller, and I stayed the same,"

she recalled.

**IN THE SECOND** grade, a chance visit to the doctor with her sister revealed the pituitary deficiency and Sharon received some growth hormones through the Children's Medical Center. But the hormones, taken from pituitary glands of dead bodies, are scarce and she was unable to continue the treatments.

The shots replace the hormones that are missing in her body and can correct the deficiency. The shots are the only way she can grow up.

She has resumed the treatment now through the Human Growth Foundation at Baylor University Medical Center. Last year she grew three inches, then added another inch this fall.

"Now the people around me seem to be getting shorter," she laughed. "They just don't seem as tall as they used to. I can tell my friends, 'boy, you sure look short here lately,' and it makes me feel good."

"They used to just seem like they were so tall. It's funny what an inch can do, but I can really tell."

"And it's nice to grow out of a pair of shoes for once," she said. "Usually I keep shoes four or five years, until they are worn out instead of growing out of them."

**SHARON IS ONE** of ten pituitary dwarfs receiving hormones under the care of Dr. Ladislav Novak and Dr. Zaven Chakmakjian, consultants in clinical pathology at Baylor. The doctors donate their time for research in the field and are searching for other children suffering from the deficiency.

"Mentally, those who are pituitary-deficient are fully developed as far as chronological age and as far as their peers," Dr. Novak said.

They have normal intelligence and can cope with school work and all normal activities in daily life except where stature is involved, such as reaching telephones or water

fountains. But their biological age is grossly retarded," he explained.

"One 16-year-old has the strength and the physical capabilities of only a nine-year-old boy, and he can't keep up in physical exercise with his age group. He may try to compensate and overdo, until he finds he can't do what others can and withdraws."

"Here is where the psychological effects become adverse."

"Psychologically, because she is among adults, Sharon thinks like an adult. But biologically she is a child."

*"If I was five feet tall, I would be perfectly happy."*

"This can create psychological trauma because people who do not know about the problem will try to talk down to her," Dr. Novak said.

**AND SOME PEOPLE** have treated her like a child, Sharon said. She considers her experience an indication of how our society treats children.

"When I'm in a crowded store, I find people just push over me and act like I don't matter. It's terrible how some people treat kids," she said. "Kids experience it when they

are young, but I have to experience it my whole life."

"I was with friends the other day and someone said to them, 'Oh, you've got a cute little helper there,' and I didn't say anything. Later one friend asked me how I could let them think that and not get mad. But I'm not ever going to see that woman again," she said.

"Sometimes I just let them think what they want to and go on. When you tell some people they just go crazy. If they ask me something like my age and then don't believe it, why do they ask me in the first place?"

**SHARON WANTS TO** be five feet tall. She doesn't know how long it will be before she reaches that height, or what she will do to celebrate.

"It's hard to believe they actually can do that much for somebody, and that there are doctors who are interested enough in other people to do it—people who care that much. I think a lot of Dr. Novak and think I owe him something," she reflected.

When she was younger, Sharon dreamed of being a nurse or teacher. She gave those dreams up because she felt too short.

"If I was five feet tall, I would be perfectly happy," she sighed. "It was always in my mind that I would be normal and that I wouldn't be different than everybody else anymore. Sometimes it's hard to wait."

"I guess what I've learned is not to get discouraged. To go through life with what you've got and make the best of it. But a lot of people have trouble with that."

Sharon also wants people to understand pituitary dwarfism.

"So many people don't know anything about it," she said. "I just want to let them know there is a real need. If there aren't people donating pituitary glands, we have no hope. We all would still be short."

Part II will take a closer look at the research into pituitary dwarfism being conducted at Baylor.

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# RICHARDSON DAILY NEWS

*'Richardson—A Growing City, With A Planned Future'*





## Only 800 can be treated each year

# Many children remain stunted

By JAN HAMILL  
News-Texan Bureau

**Editor's note:** This is the second part of a two-part series on pituitary dwarfism.

Many thousands of children who suffer pituitary deficiencies may never grow to normal height because not enough pituitary glands are collected from cadavers, says Dr. Ladislav Novak, a consultant in clinical pathology at Baylor University Medical Center.

"Not every hospital in the country is cognizant of the need to collect the pituitary glands," the researcher pointed out, "and only 80,000 to 100,000 glands are collected each year."

**PITUITARY DEFICIENT** children must have hormone shots derived from the glands to ever grow to five feet tall, Dr. Novak explained.

"One child needs 100 glands a year for the growth hormone treatment. So nationally, we only can help 800 kids out of 65,000 who are deficient, and this is a problem," he said.

The growth hormones are distributed only by the National Pituitary Agency in Baltimore to human growth centers with ongoing research projects.

Dr. Novak and Dr. Zaven Chakmakjian operate the only human growth center in Texas at Baylor University Medical Center, and they now treat ten patients, with three more pituitary deficient children to begin the shots in February.

One of their patients is 23-year-old Sharon Burnett of Mesquite. Others are a 15-year-old girl from Fort Worth; a 12-year-old Burleson boy; a 17-year-old boy from Ravena, Tex.;

two brothers, ages 12 and 15 from Balch Springs; a seven-year-old boy from Lincoln, Neb.; a four-year-old boy from Lovington, N.M. One 19-year-old boy from Fort Worth has been denied several jobs because of his dwarfism, but another 19-year-old boy from Fort Worth has successfully completed treatment by growing to five feet.

**"PITUITARY DWARFISM** is not a disease, but only a deficiency," Dr. Novak stressed. The deficiency is not hereditary, he said, although the cause has not been discovered yet. Normal-height parents can bear pituitary deficient children.

"Very early in life the pituitary gland shuts off release of growth

professor at Southern Methodist University, Dr. Novak conceded the use of growth hormones is less than ten years old. But he said the treatment is not experimental since it merely replaces natural substances.

**THE TREATMENTS ALSO** can be used on 25-year-olds, or at any age, with excellent results.

The shots are given three times a week by the child or parent, usually in leg muscles at night. Blood circulation spreads the hormone through the whole body so bones and muscles grow while body fat is reduced.

"The factor of fat change is important because some of these children are small and quite chubby,"

**"We only can help 800 kids out of 65,000 who are deficient."**

hormones in these children, and they grow very slowly compared to other children," the doctor said. "Parents often notice the problem when the child goes to kindergarten and can be compared to other children."

Hormone shots are provided free of charge to those who need them, Dr. Novak said, and only minimal lab fees are paid by the patients. The remainder of funding for human centers come from voluntary donations, he said.

"In order to help as many persons as possible, we treat children for six months, then stop for six months, repeating the cycle until the child is brought up to the adequate height of five feet."

President of the Texas Human Growth Foundation for two years, a physiologist and an anthropology

he said. "They have much less muscle mass than children of their same age."

"Within six months we can see dramatic changes. A child can grow two to three inches in one year, and this is a real victory for them. They also have more energy, eat more and are more vigorous."

There are three tests to determine whether young children are pituitary deficient.

The first utilizes Iowa Growth Charts, calculated from a large sample of normal growing children, with distributions of height and weight from three per cent to 97 per cent.

"Pituitary deficient children are usually well below the third percentile, meaning that 97 per cent of normal children are taller," Dr. Novak said.

**DOCTORS ALSO CAN** compare a child's wrist X-ray with X-rays charting normal development of wrist bones every six months. By matching X-rays, the child's biological age can be determined. Here, pituitary deficient children are at least 30 per cent behind their chronological age.

The surest test for the deficiency involves substances such as insulin and arginine to stimulate the release of growth hormones by the pituitary gland. Blood samples are taken by Dr. Chakmakjian after the stimulants, and if there is no change in the growth hormone level in the blood, doctors can be sure the child is deficient. Parents who are concerned about their children can contact the center or their pediatrician for testing, Dr. Novak said.

In older children, the deficiency is easier to detect, since the pituitary gland triggers release of the male and female hormones progesterone and estrogen. Those hormones are needed for a child to mature sexually.

**MANY** 16 to 17-year-olds may suffer from late puberty and still be below five feet tall, but Dr. Novak pointed out that problem usually will be remedied with time.

"Pituitary deficient persons have no pubic hair, no breasts and no sexual development whatsoever," Dr. Novak said. "You can easily distinguish between them and those who are simply having late puberty."

Interested persons who want more information may contact Dr. Novak at Baylor University Medical Center, or the Texas Human Growth Foundation secretary, Mrs. Marian LaMar, 7717 El Santo Lane, Dallas 75240, 231-7265.

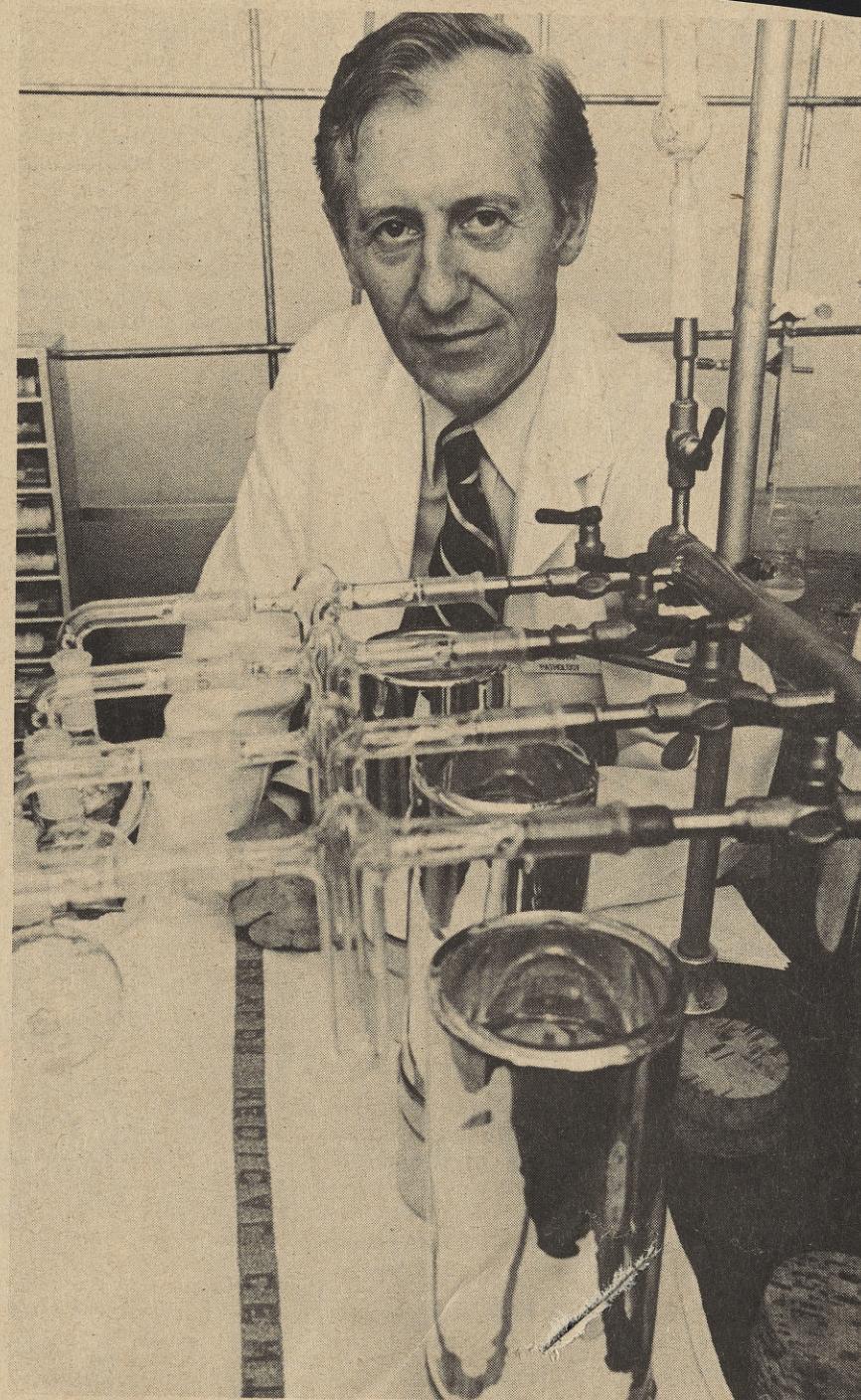
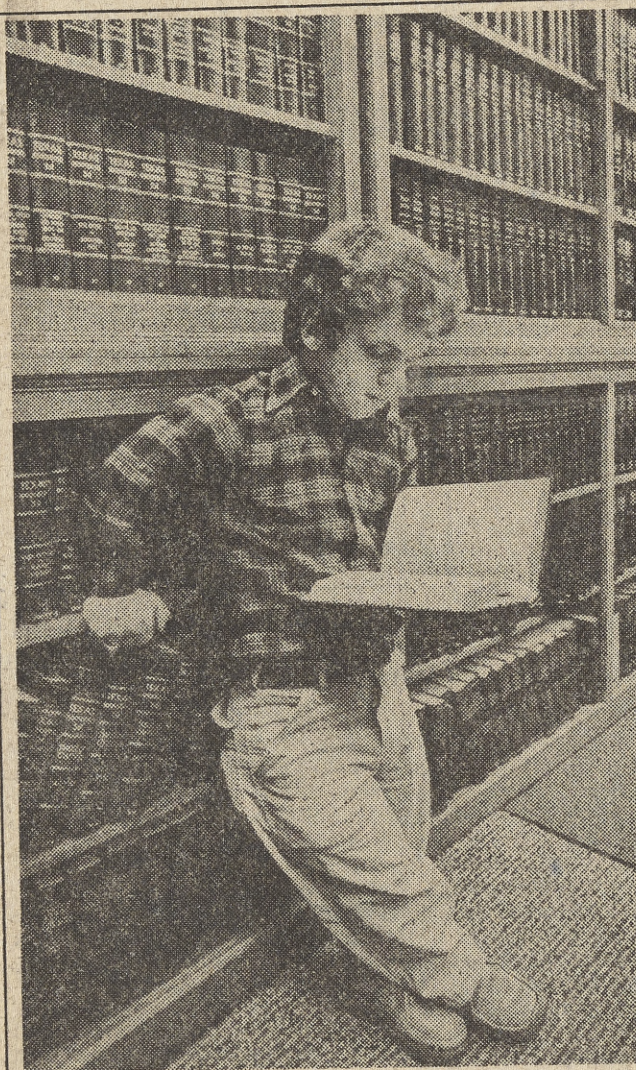


Photo by LES BLASER

**MEDICAL PIONEER** — Dr. Ladislav Novak, a consultant in clinical pathology at Baylor University Medical Center, is one of the few doctors in the country researching and treating pituitary dwarfism. He estimates there are many thousands of children who will never grow to normal height simply because there is so little awareness that the problem can be treated.





— Staff Photo by Paul Iverson

David Lamb at work in SMU Law Library

# Little people

## Dwarfs taking big strides these days

By MARY ELSON  
Staff Writer

Comedian Steve Martin does a routine parodying marijuana smokers in which he substitutes the word "small" for "stoned" in all the appropriate places.

His characters say things like, "Hey man, you want to get SMALL tonight?" or "Hey, wow, I am REALLY small now."

David Lamb thinks it's hilarious.

David Lamb is a 4-foot-3-inch dwarf.

The 25-year-old Lamb also gets a kick out of singer Randy Newman's new song called "Short People."

And not only does Lamb not mind puns about small stature, he makes them himself.

"I sort of like to make fun of my size," he says. "You know, things like, 'I'll talk to you for a little while,' or, 'We can have a short conversation.' I like it."

Lamb, it is safe to say, is not as sensitive about his height as many other dwarfs. And that may be one reason he will become the first member of Little People of America, a 2,800-member national organization of dwarfs, to become a lawyer.

If the final exams he was sweating out this week go well, Lamb will graduate this month from Southern Methodist University Law School. This summer, he was an intern for Congressman Jim Mattox in Washington and was a delegate to the state Democratic

convention in 1974 and 1976.

"No one ever said I couldn't be an attorney," Lamb said in a serious moment. "I was raised as if there was nothing I couldn't do."

Oh yes, there was one thing, he admitted, his mouth already twisting into an inevitable grin. "Not being able to go out with Farrah Fawcett Majors. That hurt."

Lamb obviously has done what the organization most desperately wants all little people to do: Accept themselves.

Having a sense of humor about height is part of that self-acceptance, but the jokes do stop with one subject: discrimination against an estimated 20,000 people in the United States who have nothing going against them except their size.

Dwarfism, medically defined as adult stature under five feet, occurs approximately once in every 10,000 births and has been identified in 85 varieties.

(The term "midget" is usually used to describe perfectly proportioned miniature adults, many of whom suffer from a correctable form of dwarfism caused by a pituitary

growth hormone deficiency. Injections are now available that may increase some dwarfs' heights to approximately 5-feet-6 inches.)

Most dwarfism, however, is uncorrectable. The most common form, achondroplasia (Lamb's type), is characterized by short limbs, wide-spaced eyes, a flat nose bridge, short fingers and a tendency to be overweight.

Only two or three types of dwarfism are associated with any form of mental retardation.

However, said Dr. Peter Sherrod, director of the Birth Defects Center at Children's Medical Center in Dallas, "People have a tendency when they see anyone of abnormal physical appearance to associate that with abnormal mental capacity. Because dwarfs are shorter than average, some people tend to treat them like children. They talk down to them, infantilize them. That can be very irritating to people who are as mature and adult as you are."

Moreover, in earlier times, the only work

dwarfs could get was in the circus or entertainment fields, so that is another stigma they must fight.

As a result, dwarfs of normal intelligence have been reared in mental institutions, placed in schools for the retarded, frequently put up for adoption by their parents and denied even the most ordinary jobs.

All that is slowly changing, however, Lamb said, as new legislation is passed to protect minorities and the handicapped. And the growth of Little People of America, founded in 1957 by actor Billy Barty, has given dwarfs both solace and support in their effort to end discrimination and to lead lives as close to normal as possible.

Dallas not only has one of the largest chapters of Little People of America, (100 members in the Metroplex), it also has two of the organization's most fervent crusaders in Lamb and Lee Kitchens, 47, an engineer for Texas Instruments, who joined the group in 1960 and was its president for four years.

Kitchens, who is 4-foot-1-inch tall, is one of the most professionally successful little people in the country. A graduate of SMU and an employee of TI for 25 years, he was a member of the team that designed the first mass-produced transistor radio and most recently was responsible for developing TI's first scientific pocket calculators.

See LITTLE on Page 6





— Staff Photo by Kurt Wallace

*Lee Kitchens built his house to suit short people, yet comfortable for average sized visitors*

## Little people striving to adapt

Continued from Page One

Kitchens will not try to tell you that being a little person, as he prefers to be called, has not presented problems. But at this point in his life, he said, "I've found an adaptation for everything."

He divides the barriers for little people into two categories: physical and social.

In the first category are out-of-reach obstacles average-sized people probably don't even think about: pay telephones, stair railings, subway handles, elevator buttons, water fountains, doorbells, light switches, grocery store shelves, refrigerator freezer doors, ticket windows and, of course, clothes.

"I generally grab the nearest passer-by and ask for help," Kitchens said, "if there's something I can't reach."

Kitchens and his 3-foot-11-inch wife, Mary, who has an art degree from Texas Woman's University, had their Richardson house custom built for small people. Light switches, kitchen counters, thermostats, door handles, windows are all built low, but "with careful selection of furniture" (modern, low-built continental style) Kitchens has managed to make the house comfortable for average-sized guests.

He drives a Cadillac equipped with foot-pedal extensions, and has his clothes made by a Hong Kong tailor. His wife makes most of her clothes and sometimes wears childrens' shoes. Both Kitchens have pilot's licenses.

These adjustments are not the toughest ones, however, Kitchen said. The biggest barrier is "living with the attitudes of the public and with your own attitudes toward yourself."

The stares and comments are the hardest things to take, and Kitchens said that when he was in high school "those things used to bug me. But I'm used to it now. I don't really care. But some little people never adjust to it."

Several months ago, the Kitchens were

sitting in a restaurant when a 4-year-old girl touched Mrs. Kitchens and asked, "Are you real or are you a puppet?"

Both Kitchens laughed, and said Mary was very real indeed. "If a little person becomes offended at something like that, they still need to have their head screwed on," Kitchens said. "I think it's pretty clear that you should respond to things like that in a positive way."

Probably the toughest age for any little person is the adolescent years when average-sized males and females start to pair up and exclude the dwarfs from normal social activities, Kitchens said. And for male dwarfs there's the added problem of being left out of athletic activities.

"The tendency for someone in that position to become a recluse, to stay at home in a circumscribed, adapted environment, is very strong," said Dr. John Edlin, a professor of psychiatry at the Southwestern Medical School. For that reason, he said, it's important to begin counseling little people at an early age about the problems they may encounter, and help them develop a positive view toward their condition.

Although some dwarfs do date and marry persons of average size, Kitchens advises against it. "When an average-sized person marries a little person, he assumes whatever stigma may be present, and that can be tough. Marriage is tough enough as it is without that."

Moreover, the growth of Little People of America has increased the opportunities for dwarfs to socialize, and many, including Lamb (who plans to get married in January), have met spouses at the group's meetings. In July, the LPA annual convention will be held in Dallas for the first time.

The question whether to have children often is a difficult one for little people, because chances usually are 50-50 the child will be a dwarf. Generally, say doctors and little people, the decision to risk having a dwarf child usually hinges on how difficult

a time the parents had with their handicap.

Lamb, who plans to marry a little person from California in January, said he would prefer that his children be dwarfs. "I can't explain it," he said, "it just has something to do with being able to share something with my child."

But even if the dwarfs have an average-sized child, which some do, there can be "all sorts of disciplinary complications," Sherrod said, "plus the child may have psychological problems dealing with parents who are dwarfs."

The Kitchens have two adopted children, Sandra, 17, an achondroplastic dwarf, and a son in college, whom doctors thought would be dwarfed but who grew to 5-feet-7 inches.

Certainly the shock to average-sized parents who produce dwarfed children can be great. Many simply cannot deal with it and put the child up for adoption or try to hide the child from the public. LPA operates an adoption service particularly to place dwarfed children with dwarfed parents, Kitchens said.

The next biggest mistake parents can make, Kitchens said, is overprotecting the child and not permitting him to do things that average-sized children of the same age are permitted to do.

Bob and Pam Queal of Dallas, parents of a 2-year-old achondroplastic dwarf, Allison, said, however, the only upsetting thing to them was that most doctors don't know enough about dwarfism to explain or reassure parents when it happens.

"I don't know how anyone could be depressed if they know the facts," Mrs. Queal said. But she admitted that "there will be harder days ahead. Right now, everybody thinks Allison's the cutest little thing they ever saw."

Learning to tolerate and graciously accept the cruel stares and remarks will be the worst adjustment for Allison, the Queals say.

But as Lee Kitchens said, the people who do those things "are the real little people."



# Twin Dwarfs Turn Small Size Into Big Business

Dwarf twins John and Greg Rice are making it big where it counts. They turned their size into an asset. "Our size could have been a handicap," John told MIDNIGHT.

"We could have looked at life and said, boy, it sure is rotten to be three feet tall. We can't reach anything.

"Or we could look at it like we do, and say, boy, it's the greatest thing that could happen to anybody.

"Why? Just because it is. Because we've run into quite a few midgets and dwarfs in our travels, but we've never seen anybody else like this — twins.

"We took a liability and made an asset out of it."

The Rice brothers, who turned 25 on Dec. 3, exhibit that same kind of snap, crackle and pop on stage.

They've been singing and dancing since last June in an entertainment extravaganza known as "The World of Sid and Marty Krofft," at the Omni International Hotel, Atlanta.

They've also appeared on the "Donny and Marie" (Osmond) TV show which the Kroffts produce.

The twins met Sid Krofft in California two years ago.

"Sid always had it in his mind to do a miniature review, using little people," John Rice said. "When he met us he just completely flipped out.

"We left such a big impression on him, he was after us for two years to do something for him. Finally, we said, 'Okay, Sid, we'll give you a month.'"

Krofft teamed them up with three-foot-eleven dancer Patty Maloney in "the miniature follies," and the promised month drew out to six months.

"We had never done singing and dancing before," John said. "Patty and a choreographer taught us a lot."

In fact, he added, "anything we put our minds to, we do.

"It's all attitude, I'm sure. We probably do more than most normal-sized people. We drive our own cars, ride motorcycles, water-ski, play tennis — we're very agile.

"We've never let anything get in our way to stop us from doing what we want. Most people look at things and figure out how it won't work. We look at things and figure out how to make it work for us."

Said brother Greg: "The only problem I have is reaching something on a top shelf. But I've got a big enough mouth to persuade somebody to get me whatever I want that's up there."

The twins have two normal-sized brothers and a sister.

"One of our brothers is six-foot-three or four and he drives a Volkswagen while we drive Cadillacs," John cracked.

"We were the babies in the family," he added. "They wanted us to stay that way, so we just never grew up."

Turning serious, he said, "Our mother died when we were in the eighth grade and our father when we were in the 11th.

"Our sister raised us in West Palm Beach, Fla."

"Greg and I have always been extroverts. We were in our high school band, and every halftime show at football games would be centered around us."



GREG AND JOHN RICE have turned their handicap to advantage and today they are both successful businessmen and entertainers. Two years

ago the twins met Sid Krofft and their show-biz careers were launched and since then they have never looked back.